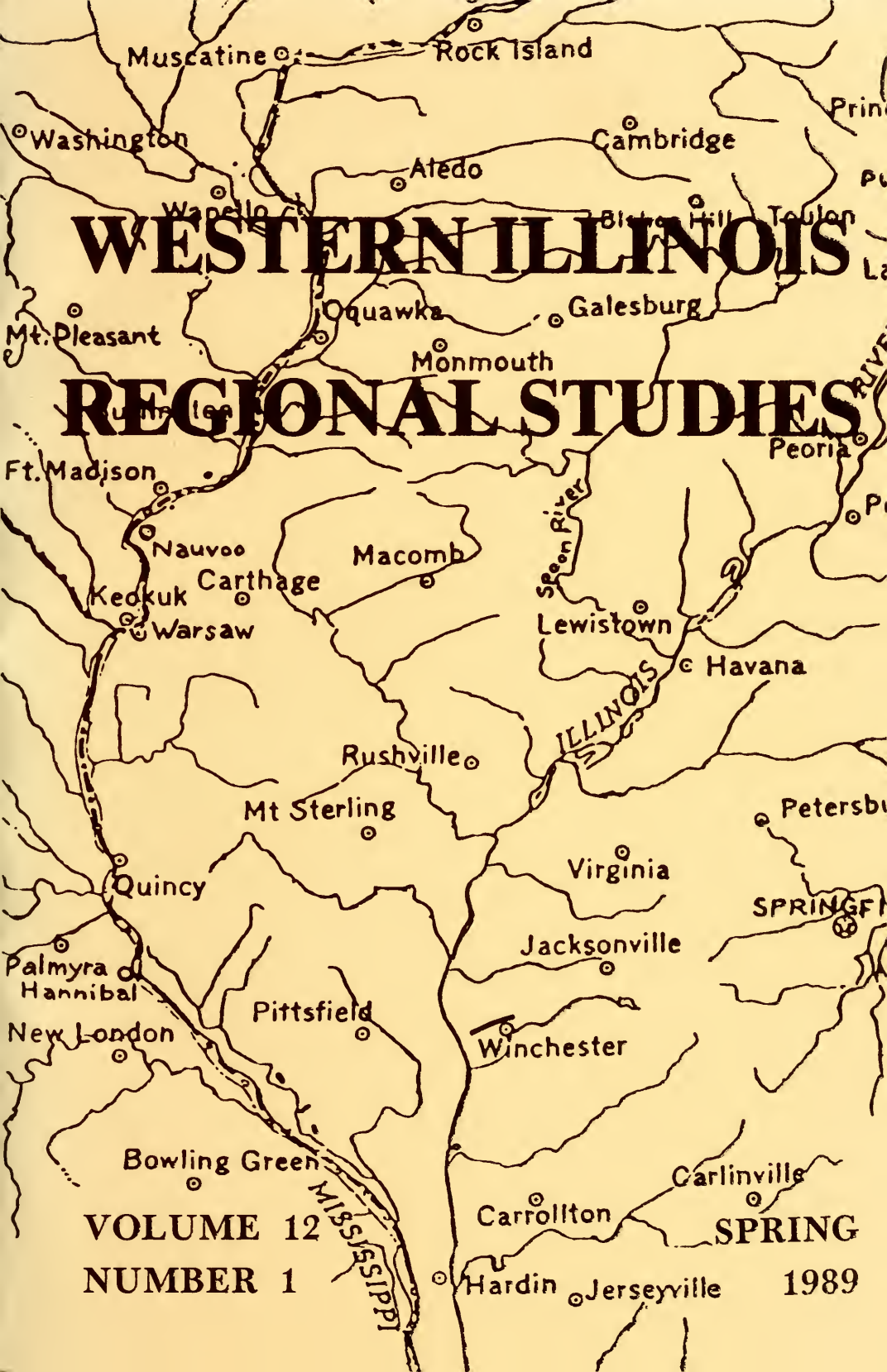
WESTERN ILLINOIS REGIONAL STUDIES



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BLACK SLAVERY IN ILLINOIS, 1720-1765

Carl J. Ekberg

In the seventeenth century when Frenchmen were establishing their colonial enterprises in the New World, chattel slavery had disappeared from Western Europe. Nevertheless, most Europeans thought of enslavement of non-European pagans as a perfectly acceptable aspect of civilized society. There were few critics of slavery in the seventeenth century, and slaves were routinely used in European colonies when such usage was deemed profitable. Slaves — Indian, black, or both — were used at one time or another in all French colonies in the New World, including the Illinois Country. This study, based upon extant source documents, deals with the history of black slaves in the Illinois Country from the time of their first appearance in the early 1720s until the end of the French regime in North America.

Indian slaves were used in Canada as early as the 1670s, and spasmodic attempts were even made to introduce black slaves there. But it was in the Antilles of the Caribbean, the famed Sugar Islands, where French slavery flourished during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Sugar cane was transplanted to Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Saint-Domingue from Brazil about 1640, and at the same time black slaves were introduced from West Africa. The indigenous Indian population of the Caribbean Islands had not worked out well as a slave labor force, and during the course of the 17th century black slave labor became as much a part of the human landscape of the Caribbean Islands as sugar cane was of the physical landscape.[2]

French colonists in Louisiana sought a supply of slave labor from the earliest days of the colony. The heat and insects of the Gulf Coast were punishing for persons accustomed to the temperate climate of France; orphans, convicts, vagabonds, and prostitutes sent to populate Louisiana usually died of disease and malnutrition.[3] The experience of the plantation owners on the Sugar Islands encouraged the settlers in Louisiana to look toward Africa as a source for their labor.

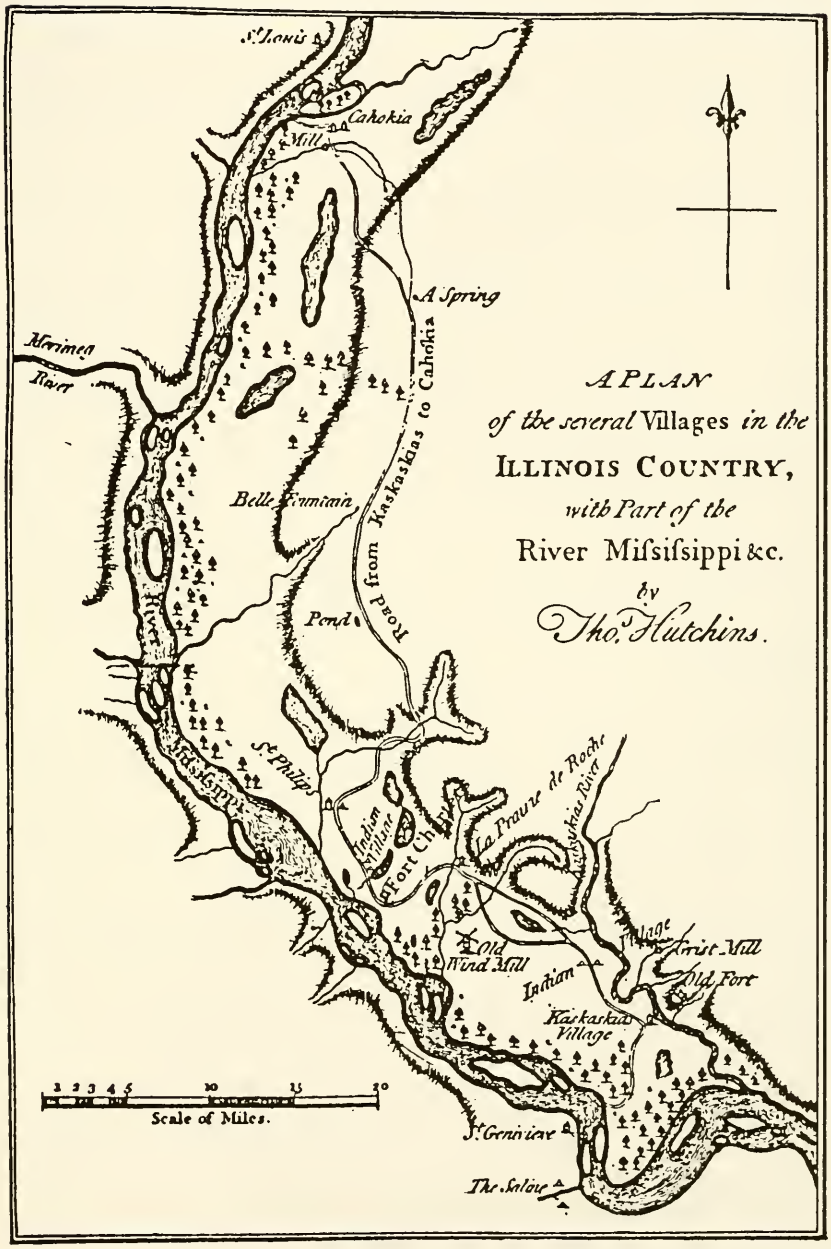
Years before New Orleans was founded in 1718, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyen de Bienville, first royal governor of Louisiana, conceived an interesting scheme to supply black slaves for his colony. He looked about himself and

saw an abundance of North American Indian flesh that might be harnessed for some profitable purpose, and he proposed to the royal government in France that an exchange might be arranged whereby Indians could be traded for blacks. Indians in Louisiana did not serve well as slaves because they had a tendency to flee back to their tribes, but Bienville reckoned that the Indians could be put to good use elsewhere. Louis XIV' ministers were not persuaded by Bienville's salesmanship, however, and they bluntly informed him in 1710 that if French colonists in Louisiana wanted black slaves they would have to pay for them in sound merchandise or hard cash. In any event, a scattering of black slaves had arrived in Louisiana, probably via the Caribbean Islands, as early as 1712.[4]

When French-Canadian missionaries and fur traders established Cahokia (1699) and Kaskaskia (1703), the first settlements in the Illinois Country, they did not bring slaves with them from Canada. The first black slaves to arrive in the Illinois Country were surely transported up the Mississippi from Lower Louisiana. By 1719, shortly after New Orleans was founded, several shiploads of blacks arrived in Louisiana under the auspices of the Company of the West, the royal chartered company that had assumed control of the colony in 1717.[5] It seems likely that Jesuit missionaries at Kaskaskia were the first owners of black slaves in the Illinois Country. Slaves were in short supply and much in demand. The Jesuits with their substantial financial resources and powerful political connections were in the best position to purchase slaves and get them shipped up the Mississippi. A document dating from 1720 describes the Jesuits to be the owners of sixteen to eighteen slaves, "negroes and savages." Although it is impossible to determine from this description the number of black slaves in this grouping, the Society of Jesus in Kaskaskia was apparently the single largest owner of slaves in the Illinois Country at that time.[6]

In October 1720, Pierre Dugué, sieur de Boisbriant, commandant at Fort de Chartres, wrote from Kaskaskia that "100 negros would be marvelous for this settlement. [i.e. the Illinois Country]."[7] Boisbriant went on to explain that black slaves could be used in clearing land for agricultural purposes and that Illinois would then be able to furnish foodstuffs for most of Louisiana. Boisbriant never received the requested 100 blacks, but it is clear that a number of black slaves was brought into the Illinois Country during the 1720s.

In April 1721, Governor Bienville reported that three slaving ships had arrived in Biloxi from the coast of Angola. These three slavers contained a cargo of 925 blacks, and although many were ill Bienville was confident that a diet of maize (which Frenchmen did not normally eat) would soon restore the blacks to good health. We know that some of these blacks wound up in Illinois, for one month after the arrival of the slave ships Bienville commented on the allocation of the newly arrived blacks: "The distribution has been made with great fairness. The colonists from Illinois who were in the lower colony have participated and are willing to testify to



A map of villages in the Illinois Country, published in London in 1778.

it. . . . Forty of these negros are reserved to row in the boats that will ascend [the Mississippi] to the Illinois Country."[8] From Bienville's report it is impossible to determine if all forty of the black rowers had been allocated permanently to the settlers from the Illinois Country. However, given the fact that these settlers had traveled to Biloxi for the distribution of slaves, it seems likely that many of the blacks were destined to remain in Illinois.

The surnames of black slaves as they appear in the parish records of various Illinois communities during the first half of the eighteenth century — Bambara, Sambra, Sénégal, Jacca (i.e. Jaga), Manon — reveal the African origins of many of the slaves.[9] These names suggest that either the slaves themselves, or perhaps their parents, had been captured and sold in West Africa, principally in the watersheds of the Senegal and Niger rivers. This method of ascertaining the African origins of French slaves in the Illinois Country confirms the statistical compilations of Gaston Martin, which revealed that 85% of slaves carried from Africa to French America on ships sailing from Nantes during the period 1715-1775 came from Senegambia, the Windward Coast, or the Bight of Benin.[10]

A general census of the Illinois Country was conducted in 1726. The total resident population of the area — whites, blacks, and Indians — was shown as 501, although it is clear that the census taker did not manage to record every human soul. Blacks (all slaves apparently) — men, women, and children — numbered 118, thus constituting some 24% of the entire population.[11]

The next census of French Illinois was taken in 1732. This was a detailed tabulation, conducted community by community. The total human population of the area — from Cahokia in the north to Kaskaskia in the south — was 471, although once again some residents managed to elude the census taker. The black slaves, adults and children numbered 168, constituting more than one-third of the population in the Illinois Country. The Society of Jesus in Kaskaskia and Philippe Renaut at his lead mine in Missouri were the largest slave holders, commanding 22 blacks. Renaut's black slaves were the first black inhabitants of what is today the state of Missouri. They were not, however, permanent residents on the west side of the Mississippi River, for the lead mining operations there were only seasonal in nature, and Renaut's enterprise soon collapsed.[12]

The 1737 census of the Illinois Country listed a total of 314 blacks, indicating that the black population of the region had doubled in five years. This marked increase was due largely to continuing imports of blacks from Lower Louisiana rather than an exploding birth rate within the existing population of Illinois, for the ratio of children to adults was approximately the same in 1732 and 1737. Yet existence for French slaves was probably less harsh in the Illinois Country than on the Caribbean Islands; if blacks were not reproducing rapidly in Illinois during the 1730s they at least were not dying in droves as they did on the notorious sugar plantations in the West Indies.[13]

In 1747, the governor of Louisiana, François Rigaud de Vaudreuil, issued an order forbidding all shipments of blacks and mulattoes from "New Orleans and other places on the lower river to Illinois."[14] Vaudreuil reasonably explained that slaves shipped north up the Mississippi could not readily be replaced in the lower colony (war with England was disrupting commerce on the high seas) and that the slaves working in the area around New Orleans were being used more efficiently than they could be used in Illinois; presumably Vaudreuil meant that the larger the agricultural enterprise the more efficient slave labor was, and plantations on the lower river therefore got first priority in the allocation of black slaves. It is not known how effective Vaudreuil's order was. But the almost continuous warfare between England and France for the duration of the French regime in Louisiana meant that there was a general shortage of slaves in the colony and that few were shipped north to the Illinois Country. Increases in the black slave population of Illinois after 1747 were therefore generated largely by reproduction with the existing population. It seems apparent that the birth rate of black slaves in the Illinois often exceeded the death rate, which means that many of these blacks had a level of material subsistance and health that surpassed many free peasants in metropolitan France.

Early in the nineteenth century, Edmund Flagg, a newspaper man who had traveled widely, said that he had never seen a group of sleeker, healthier mortals than the blacks that inhabited the former French villages in Illinois.[15] This remark may have been prompted because Flagg had seen black slaves in the Anglo-American Southeast who did not live so well as slaves in the middle Mississippi Valley. Yet the fact that there was never even a hint of slave rebellion in French Illinois, and the fact that slaves there often carried firearms, suggests that the French slaves in Upper Louisiana may have been living about as well as any slaves in the world during the eighteenth century.[16]

Major Jean-Jacques Macarty was commandant of the Illinois Country from 1751 to 1760, and in 1752 he drafted the most comprehensive and detailed census ever done of French Illinois. Whites and blacks were listed as residents in all six communities — Kaskaskia, Fort de Chartres (including the village of Chartres), St. Philippe, Prairie du Rocher, Cahokia, and Ste. Genevieve. Ste. Genevieve, only recently founded on the west bank of the Mississippi, had but two blacks in its fledgling population. The 446 black slaves in the Illinois Country in 1752 made up 32% of the total population, thus the ratio of blacks in the population of the region remained more or less constant between 1732 and 1752. Perhaps underlying economic structures — wealth, distribution of agricultural land, etc. — of the Illinois Country contrived to establish that approximate ratio.[17]

Distribution of Black Slaves 1752

	Adult males	Adult females	Boys	Girls
Kaskaskia	102	67	45	32
Chartres	35	25	16	13
St. Philippe	20	10	7	8
Prairie du Rocher	18	8	8	6
Cahokia	11	6	4	3
Ste. Genevieve	2			
Totals	188	116	80	62

The black slavery practiced in the Illinois Country was originally a French brand of slavery. To understand this system of human bondage, it is necessary to begin by commenting upon the famous Black Code, the *Code Noir*. This law code was first promulgated by the French crown for the West Indian Islands in 1685, and was reissued, *mutatis mutandis*, for French Louisiana in 1724.[18]

The Black Code was a product of the centralizing Bourbon monarchy in France. Although not promulgated until two years after Jean-Baptiste Colbert's death in 1683, the code stemmed from the legal reforms instituted in France by that ramrod of Louis XIV's bureaucracy. Historians have argued about whether the intention of the Black Code was humanitarian or whether the code was simply a hard-headed legal document. The word humanitarian did not exist in the seventeenth century; moreover, Colbert was not the sort of person to sit around fretting about the plight of unfortunate slaves. Surely the eminent French historian of slavery, Gaston Martin, was correct to argue that the intention of the code was purely economic and not at all humanitarian.[19] It must also be acknowledged, however, that enlightened economic interest (which the code was intended to represent) and human treatment of slaves were not necessarily incompatible.

The Black Code defined the legal status of French black slaves: they were chattels that could be bought and sold like other personal property. Yet the code also clearly recognized slaves as human beings, for Colbert and Louis XIV were not interested in justifying slavery on racial grounds. To seventeenth-century Frenchmen like Colbert, the institution of human bondage was part and parcel of human society; it was normal and usual and therefore did not require rationalization. Like all documents drafted under Colbert's auspices, the Black Code is a dispassionate and tightly reasoned document — reasoned to serve not the blacks, nor even their masters, but rather the interests of the absolute French state.[20]

The Louisiana Black Code is a lengthy document containing fifty-five articles, which make the following salient points: slaves were to be properly housed, clothed and fed; slave children could not be sold away from their parents until they had arrived at puberty; masters could whip and bind their slaves, but the slaves could not be imprisoned, mutilated, or put to death without due process of the law; slaves could not be worked

before sunrise or after sunset; old and infirm slaves had to be cared for; slave women were not to be sexually exploited; slaves were to be baptized and schooled in the Christian (i.e. Roman Catholic) faith; slaves could not carry firearms, or even "large sticks"; slaves were to be encouraged to marry with masters' consent but could not be compelled to marry against their will; interracial marriage and co-habitation were forbidden; masters could not manumit slaves without government permission. Finally, the code provided slaves with the right to take their masters to court at no cost if they felt that their masters were abusing them in violation of other provisions. If not the entire code, this last provision was surely an example of Colbert's over-confidence in the ability of government to control the actions of refractory men. It is hard to imagine a black slave in French Louisiana bringing suit against his master for breach of the Black Code.[21]

Whether the Black Code was genuinely effective in regulating relations between French colonists and their black slaves is a serious question. Indeed, there may even be some question as to how well known the provisions of the code were in the remote Illinois Country. Some colonial administrators in Louisiana did take the code seriously, however, and even attempted to enforce it. In 1751, for example, Governor Vaudreuil issued on behalf of King Louis XV of France a "Règlement sur la police pour la province de la Louisiane."[22] Within the context of this title, the word "police" referred to everything concerned with the upkeep, cleanliness, and security of the public domain, but Vaudreuil's "Règlement" dealt mostly with slavery. The thirty-first article referred "all other matters pertaining to negros to the Black Code, which has provided for all cases."[23] Once again we encounter the French bureaucrat's confidence that if the laws are on the books everything is provided for.

In any case, the "Règlement" of 1751 reflected Vaudreuil's ruminations about how to strike a proper balance between severity and humanity in dealing with black slaves. Surely not all French colonials in the Mississippi Valley meditated upon this issue the way Vaudreuil did, but the governor was experiencing some of the confusion of modern parents, who seem to be losing control of their children and do not know whether to react by becoming more severe or more permissive. Vaudreuil clearly believed that Louisiana colonists were losing their grip on their slaves, and his "Reglement" represented an effort to clamp down on such nefarious activities as drinking of alcoholic beverages, circulating freely at night, frequenting of disreputable establishments (operated by freed negros), and reckless racing of horses. One can well imagine modern American parents drawing up a similar list about their children. Indeed, the "Reglement" of 1751 was pointedly paternal in its wording. Article 19 admonished slave owners to discipline their negros "en bon père de famille," as a good father of the family.[24] Yet Article 28 brings us back to the realities of eighteenth-century slave-holding society, for that article prescribes "fifty lashes and branding of the *fleur-de-lys* on the buttocks for any negro or other slave who is insolent, forgets he is a slave, and does not show appropriate submissive-

ness."[25] Afterall, a good father must not spare the rod or, in this case, the branding iron.

The patently paternal attitude of the French colonists toward their black slaves was best expressed in the writings of Le Page du Pratz. Du Pratz was one of the many Netherlanders who took France as his adopted country during the Old Regime. In 1718, the year New Orleans was founded, Du Pratz sailed for French Louisiana to make his fortune. He was not successful in that ambition and he returned to France in 1734, disenchanted with colonial adventures. Du Pratz did not, however, lose interest in Louisiana and during the 1750s he began to write about the colony in which he had once lived. The most important of his writings on Louisiana was published in Paris under the title, *Histoire de la Louisiane.*[26] The title was a bit of a misnomer, however, for large sections of this "history" contain practical advice for persons considering emigration to Louisiana. One section contains advice on how the French colonist should manage his black slaves, and this section gives us some indication of what eighteenth-century Frenchmen thought about their slaves.

Du Pratz's advice on managing slaves echoed much of the *Code Noir* on such matters as careful attendance to the slaves' physical and spiritual needs. Du Pratz's views were, however, less coldly bureaucratic and more personal and specific. For example, he was convinced that blacks smelled differently and stronger than Europeans and recommended that slave owners prudently locate their slave quarters in accordance with the prevailing winds so that the owners "be as little incommoded as possible with their natural smell. . . ."[27] But, although Du Pratz took some time to delineate physiological differences between blacks and whites, he never continued on this tack to the point of claiming that blacks were racially inferior. Like many eighteenth-century Europeans, Du Pratz did not justify slavery upon racial grounds; slavery was merely part of the natural order of the universe. Indeed, when paternally discussing the housing for "my people" after he had settled upon his concession at Natchez, Du Pratz seemed to lump French *engagés*, Indian slaves, and black slaves altogether as indistinguishable members of his own "family" of laborers.[28]

Du Pratz concluded his *Histoire de la Louisiane* with the remark that "one may, by attention and humanity, easily manage negroes; and, as an inducement, one has the satisfaction to draw great advantage from their labors."[29] This remark is probably an accurate summation of enlightened French colonists' view of their black slaves: practical, reasonable, not very racist, unsentimental, and entreprenurial.

Major Jean-Jacques Macarty's census of the Illinois communities in 1752 reveals that of the 167 heads of household (including single soldiers stationed at Fort de Chartres) 69, or 41%, owned one black slave or more.[30] This would suggest that slaveholding was a rather democratized institution in the Illinois Country. However, eight owners (4%) owned 216 (49%) of the black slaves. Two of the largest black slave holders in the Illinois Country were the Jesuits in Kaskaskia (34) and the Seminary of Foreign

Lithograph of Kaskaskia. Courtesy of the Illinois State Historical Library.

Missions in Cahokia (19). Antoine Bienvenu owned an astonishing number of blacks, fifty-five at his residence in Kaskaskia, and ten more at his plantation ("habitation") at Prairie du Rocher. Bienvenu was the only slaveholder in French Illinois that seems to have operated large, slave-worked agricultural enterprises similar to the cotton and tobacco plantations of the Anglo-American South.

It is apparent that the French in the Illinois Country used their black slaves principally as agricultural laborers and domestic servants, but there were plans to use slave labor on other projects. The most important of these was mining. For years the French had known about the lead mines in what are now St. Francois and Washington counties in Missouri and they fervently hoped to find silver there as well.[31] All Frenchmen who were interested in these mining operations agreed that black slaves were required to work the mines, for the work was both backbreaking and dangerous. It was once thought that one of the early French lead miners, Philippe Renaut, brought literally *hundreds* of black slaves up the Mississippi to work his mines in Missouri. Given the meager supply of blacks in Louisiana during the 1720s, Renaut would have had to have commandeered virtually every slave in the entire colony in order to have employed the 500 slaves he has been credited with having.[32] Nonetheless, Renaut was clearly one of the early and important slave holders in the upper Mississippi River Valley, and the 1726 census of the Illinois Country listed twenty blacks in his possession.[33]

It is a commonplace fact that black slaves were frequently trained to perform skilled labor on the plantations of the Anglo-American. There is little evidence that this occurred in French Illinois, probably because of the different settlement pattern. Instead of residing on large, isolated, self-sufficient plantations, the French colonists of the Illinois Country lived for the most part clustered together in villages. Within these villages were a substantial number of skilled craftsmen, who made it unnecessary to train many slaves as craftsmen or artisans.

The inflation that afflicted Louisiana during the eighteenth century was reflected in the prices of slaves in the Illinois Country. In the parlance of colonial Louisiana slave markets, a *pièce d'Inde* (from the Spanish *pieza de India*) was a unit of labor.[34] In practice young-adult, healthy blacks of either sex qualified as *pièce d'Inde* in Upper Louisiana. At Kaskaskia in 1724 *pièces d'Inde* were fetching 1000 livres; by 1740 the price had risen to 1500 livres; by 1747 to 2000 livres; and by the end of the French regime in Illinois *pièces d'Inde* were bringing 3000 livres,.[35] The inflated prices in 1763 probably stemmed from disruptions in commerce brought on by the French and Indian War and devaluation of French currency.

Although the detailed census of 1752 had no rubric for free blacks and mulattos, some of these persons existed in the Illinois communities. In 1730 Antoine Laplume, a bachelor resident of the village of Chartres arranged for the future freedom of a black married couple, Joseph and Marie, "in recompense for their good service. They have always been very

zealous in the care of his person and his goods, and he hopes that they will remain in his service until his death."[36] Laplume was determined that the couple should have their freedom, and he specified in the manumission document that should he depart the Illinois Country for France Joseph and Marie were to be freed as though he had died.

Laplume, who could not write, had this document drafted by the royal notary at Fort de Chartres, Jerome. Article 50 of the Louisiana Black Code decreed that in order for a slave owner to manumit a slave he had to obtain the authorization of the colonial government, but Laplume had not bothered to request this authorization of the commandant at the fort. In 1746, however, when Jean and Elizabeth Bourbonnais wished to free their black slave, Catherine, "for the services she has rendered," they presented a formal request to the chevalier de Bertet, commandant at Fort de Chartres, in which they specifically adduced Article 50 of the code as requiring the commandant's approval.[37] Perhaps the Black Code was still unknown in the Illinois Country in 1730 but had arrived there by 1746; or perhaps the chevalier de Bertet was more punctilious than DuTisné, who had been commandant in 1730. This is a matter of some interest, for it may reveal the extent to which the Black Code was known and enforced in Upper Louisiana.

As noted above, the Black Code clearly recognized black slaves as human beings. Slavery in French Louisiana was not based explicitly upon notions of black racial inferiority. However, there was also no doubt in the Illinois Country about the slave's inferior status, and an interesting case in Kaskaskia from 1730 demonstrates this. Jean Baxe was a baptized black slave belonging to the children of the deceased M. Tessier, and François Bastien was a white tenant farmer living and working on the Tessier "habitation." These two men, one a black slave and one a free white, became embroiled in scuffle in December 1730, and Bastien brought charges against Baxe for assault.[38]

Terrisse de Ternan, "officer of His Majesty's troops in this province [i.e. Louisiana], on behalf of the Company of the Indies," summoned Baxe before him for questioning. Baxe testified that Bastien had hit him several times on the arm and, in order to avoid further abuse, Baxe had seized hold of Bastien and physically restrained him. Baxe acknowledged that when Monsieur LaRose arrived on the scene that he, Baxe, was holding Bastien immobile in his arms, but he insisted that he was only doing so in order that Bastien's anger would subside and things could calm down. Terrisse, the investigating officer, recorded that the Code Noir specified corporal punishment for black slaves only if they had rebelled against free *habitants*. Terrisse then referred the case to the commanding officers of the Illinois Country, with the observation that Baxe's infraction did not seem grave enough to warrant public punishment.[39]

Terrisse himself was an officer with a tarnished reputation; he was known as a drinker and an individualist, who sometimes chaffered under military discipline.[40] In any case, when the commanding officers of the

Illinois reviewed the Baxe case, along with Terrisse's recommendation of leniency, they did not agree fully with the recommendation. Baxe was sentenced to apologize publicly on his knees to Bastien, to be flogged on three consecutive days, and to bow down to Bastien whenever in the future he should find himself in the white man's presence.[41] This may not have been severe punishment by the standards of nineteenth-century American slave society, but it is clear that the commanding officers of the French Illinois Country did want black slaves getting out of line.

Forty years ago, Frank Tannenbaum's small book, *Slave and Citizen,* introduced to modern historiography the topic of comparative slave systems. Tannenbaum came to the perhaps simplistic conclusion that the various systems of slavery employed in the Americas — British, American, Dutch, Danish, French, Spanish, and Portugese — were characterized by varying degrees of severity. The systems used by northern Europeans and Anglo-Americans were the harshest; those used by southern Europeans, Spaniards and Portugese, were least harsh; and the French system fell somewhere in the middle.[42]

Tannenbaum's thesis has been revised and refined over the years, and many of its points have been disputed. Although the French Black Code is generally viewed as a relatively enlightened code that recognized the humanity of blacks and that theoretically should have limited cruelties and abuses within slave society, grave questions have been raised about the extent to which the code was enforced. It is hard to argue that on the notorious sugar islands of the Caribbean, where life was a nightmare for most slaves, that French black slaves were treated any better than English slaves.[43] And recent students of black slavery in French Louisiana have suggested that the colonial government either could not or would not use the Black Code to intercede between brutal masters and their black slaves.[44]

Although my conclusions are tentative at this point, I am prepared to suggest that black slavery as practiced in the Illinois Country was probably less brutal and more humane than slavery practiced by French colonists anywhere else in North America or the Caribbean. Why this was true is not entirely clear, but there are several possible explanations. First, there was in the Illinois Country never any problem with an adequate food supply. The region was the granary for all Louisiana, and the people of the region, whites and blacks alike, never had to compete for subsistance of suffer malnutrition. Second, the *habitants* of the Illinois Country lived clustered together in villages rather than dispersed on isolated plantations. Probably whimsical or capricious cruelty from a sadistic master was less likely to occur within the confines of a village community than on a remote plantation.

Lastly, there was the omnipresence of Roman Catholic clergy in the Illinois Country. Although the clergy themselves were often slave holders, the missionaries' intimate knowledge of the society within which they lived and worked probably mitigated the brutality of the slavery practiced

there. The missionary priests, both Jesuits and Seminarians, saw to it that slaves were baptized and often married. Although Herbert Gutman has described the frequency with which slaves in the Anglo-American Southeast did maintain families of some sort, stable family life was probably more common in the French Illinois Country — and this by definition had the effect of lessening the psychic traumas of slave existence.[45]

Despite the enormous recent interest in the history of black slavery in North America, including nineteenth-century Illinois,[46] slavery in French Illinois remains virtually *terra incognita*. The foregoing study is merely an introduction to a topic that is significant for two reasons: black slaves constituted an important segment of the population and the work force in colonial Illinois, and the slavery practiced there was a distinctive variety that provides fascinating data for cross-cultural investigations of slavery.

NOTES

I would like to thank Professor Stephanie Shaw of Ohio State University, formerly of Illinois State University, for having made numerous suggestions that helped to improve this article at an earlier stage of its development.

[1]The best introduction to slavery in the Western world is David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1966). For a broader and more speculative approach, see Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982).

[2]Concerning the early history of slavery in the French colonies of North America and the Caribbean, see Gaston Martin, *Histoire de l'esclavage dans les colonies française* (Paris: Presse universitaires de France, 1948); and Marcel Trudel, *L'Esclavage au Canada français: Histoire et conditions de l'esclavage* (Quebec, Canada: Presses universitaires Laval, 1960), and Gabriel Debien, *Les esclaves aux Antilles française (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)* (Société d'Histoire de la Guadeloupe: Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, 1974).

[3]James D. Hardy Jr., "The Transportation of Convicts to Colonial Louisiana," *Louisiana History* 7 (1966), pp. 207-22.

[4]Minister to Bienville, 10 May 1710, abstract of letter in Bibliothèque Nationale, nouvelles acquisitions 9310, fol. 141; Daniel H. Usner Jr, "From African Captivity to American Slavery: The Introduction of Black Laborers to Colonial Louisiana," *Louisiana History* 20 (1979), 25-48.

[5]Usner, "African Captivity to American Slavery," 25-28. John Mason Peck, an abolitionist, was the first person to present a history of slavery in Illinois. He did so in a series of newspaper articles written in 1847, and his first several articles dealt with slavery in the Illinois Country during the French regime [see Roger D. Bridges (ed.), "John Mason Peck on Illinois Slavery," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 75 (Autumn, 1982), 179-217].

[6]"Etat de la Louisiane au mois de Juin, 1720," Archives de la Guerre (hereafter AG), A1 2592, fol. 93.

[7]Boisbriant to the Company of the Indies, 3 Oct. 1720, AG, A1 2592, fols. 97-98.

[8]Bienville to the Company of the Indies, 25 Apr. 1721, AG, A1 2592, fols. 106-08.

[9]Transcripts of Kaskaskia parish registers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri; Marthé Faribault-Beauregard (ed.), *La populations des forts français d'Amérique II* (Montréal: Editions Bergeron, 1984).

[10]Gaston Martin, *Nantes au XVIIIe siècle: L'Ere des négriers (1714-1774)* (F. Alcan: Paris, 1931); Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, Wis., 1969), p. 166.

[11]Charles R. Maduell Jr. (ed.), *Census Tables of Louisiana, 1699-1732* (Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing, 1972), pp. 57-60.

[12]Ibid., 151-53.

[13]Archives Nationales (hereafter AN), C13C, Vol. 4, fol. 197.

[14]Vaudreuil's order, 1 May 1737, AN, F3, Vol. 243, fol. 13.

[15]Edmund Flagg, "The Far West, 1836-1837," in Reuben G. Thwaites (ed.), *Early Western Travels. 1748-1846*, 32 vols. (Cleveland, 1906), Vol. 27:56.

[16]My assumption that slaves in the French communities on the east bank of the Mississippi in the Illinois Country as least occasionally carried firearms is based upon the fact that slaves in Ste. Genevieve on the west bank of the river routinely did so. I deal with this issue in a recent book *Colonial Ste. Genevieve: An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier* (Gerald, Mo.: Patrice Press, 1985), 348-49.

[17]The original of the 1752 census of the Illinois Country is in the Vaudreuil Papers [Huntington Library Manuscripts, Loudoun Collection (hereafter HMLO) 426]. There is an error in the census in tabulating the slaves at Chartres; there were thirty-five rather than thirty-four adult males. This means that the grand total of slaves in 1752 should be 446 instead of 445.

[18]"Edit concernant les Negres a la Louisiane," *Publications of the Louisiana Historical Society* 4 (1908), 75-90.

[19]Martin, *Histoire de l'esclavage*, 25-30.

[20]"Edit concernant les Nègres."

[21]Ibid.

[22]"Reglèment," AN, C13A, Vol. 35, fols. 40-51. Concerning this decree and its enforcement in Lower Louisiana, see James T. McGowan, "Creation of a Slave Society. Louisiana Plantations in the Eighteenth Century," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Rochester, 1976, 145-55.

[23]"Reglement," fol. 50.

[24]Ibid., fol. 46.

[25]Ibid., fol. 49.

[26]Louisiana State University Press has recently published a good facsimile of the 1774 English edition of Du Pratz's work: Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz, *The*

History of Louisiana, ed. Joseph G. Tregle Jr. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1975).

[27]Du Pratz, *History of Louisiana,* 382.

[28]Du Pratz, 27.

[29]Du Pratz, 387.

[30]1752 census, HMLO 426.

[31]Ruby Johnson Swartzlow, "The Early History of Lead Mining in Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 28 (1934), 184-94, 287-95.

[32]The story about Renaut's 500 slaves seems to have begun with John Mason Peck's serialized account of Illinois slavery that first appeared in 1847 [Bridges (ed.), "John Mason Peck," 190. This story was perpetuated in N. Dwight Harris, *The History of Negro Servitude in Illinois* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1904), p. 2.

[33]Maduell (ed.), *Census Tables,* pp. 57-60.

[34]See Curtin, *Slave Trade,* p. 22.

[35]Kaskaskia Manuscripts (hereafter KM), Randolph County Courthouse, Chester, Illinois, 24:9:13:1;40:2:20:1; 47:1:10:1; 63:6:19:1.

[36]KM, 30:__:__:1.

[37]KM, 46:10:8:1.

[38]KM, 30:12:22:1.

[39]KM, 30:12:22:2.

[40]Concerning Terrisse de Ternan, see Carl J. Ekberg, "Terrisse de Ternan, Epistoler and Soldier," *Louisiana History,* 23 (Fall 1982), 400-08.

[41]KM, 30:12:22:3.

[42]Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York: Vintage Books, 1946), p. 65.

[43]See Davis, *The Problem of Slavery,* pp. 206-07, 252.

[44]McGowan, "Creation of a Slave Society," chaps. i, ii; Usner, "African Captivity to American Slavery," 37.

[45]Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Slave Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

[46]See for exalmple, Paul Finckelman, "Slavery, the 'More Perfect Union,' and the Prairie State," *Illinois Historical Journal,* 80 (1988), 248-269.

THE BIRTHPLACE OF WYATT EARP

William Urban

Wyatt Earp was born March 19, 1848, in Monmouth, Illinois. That fact is undisputed. However, the location of his birthplace inside the city has been the subject of heated discussion for years. This has been especially true since the establishment of the Wyatt Earp Birthplace Museum in 1986 by Robert and Melba Matson et al in honor of the town's well-known native son. Over the years Robert Matson was a teacher and weatherman and had served as alderman when the city was seeking ways to stimulate the local economy; he had modernized an old house into apartments in association with the "Monmouth Preservationists;" and he had long had an interest in the dispute over the birthplace. After witnessing the success of the Monmouth Sesquicentennial celebration (which included a western-style "bank robbery"), a group headed by the Matsons bought one of the houses long identified as Wyatt Earp's birthplace and energetically set about making it into a tourist attraction: the Wyatt Earp Birthplace Museum. They recruited volunteer labor to strip away wallpaper, to paint, to do carpenter's work, and to prepare displays. They asked for donations of furniture and display items and publicized the project widely. They organized a Wyatt Earp birthday celebration which quickly became a popular event and ultimately incorporated a non-profit organization to manage the museum.[1]

To anyone ever associated with such a program, the beginning stages seem frustrating and slow. Those who learn of the program only as it approaches fruition, however, tend to see it as hasty and hurried. So it was in this case. In the minds of many citizens, the actual location of the birthplace had never been satisfactorily settled. Therefore, even before mock Gunfights at the OK Corral were held on the city square, a debate had begun as to whether this house was indeed Wyatt Earp's birthplace or merely a typical mid-nineteenth-century farmhouse. This study examines the entire matter of the famous western marshal's birth in Monmouth, distinguishing what we do know from what we don't.

Over the years two houses had been championed as Wyatt's birthplace. Neither was the home of Nicholas Earp (1813-1907), Wyatt's father, who was believed to have been away in service in the Mexican War until mid-

Wyatt Earp Birthplace Museum, 406 S. 3rd, Monmouth. Photo by William Urban, 1988.

1848.[2] As one variation of the local legend ran, Wyatt's mother, Virginia, moved into the home of a relative, "Aunt Betsy," who was also expecting a child, and bore her child there. The problem, as it was perceived at that time, was "which relative?" If "Aunt Betsy," which Aunt Betsy?

Nicholas Earp had immigrated to Monmouth from Kentucky in 1845. Tax records show that he owned two horses and a wagon. His brothers and sisters followed him to Monmouth in 1846. At that time the town was hardly more than a village, with the houses scattered on the blocks around the city square. Most houses were hardly more than shanties, four or five to a block, with large gardens and pastures. As Jeff Rankin, editor of *Born of the Prairie, Monmouth, Illinois 1831-1981,* put it (p. 66): "Monmouth's earliest settlers lacked the means or inspiration for constructing houses of aesthetic value, their principal concern being getting a roof over their heads in the most expedient way possible." Just as much of the farmland was owned by eastern investors and speculators, so many city lots were owned by local lawyers who arranged for the sale or rental of farmland to immigrants. (Ivory Quinby owned the property on which the Birthplace Museum stands.) These men held the political offices, speculated in land, and built impressive homes, some of which were worth two to four thousand dollars by 1860.

Walter Earp, the head of the family, had come to Monmouth in 1846 with two horses. By profession he was a justice of the peace who assisted newcomers in registering land titles at the court house. He rented a house near the city square and walked to his small office. He was never a judge and never held political office, but he was well respected — when he died in 1854, the *Atlas* wrote a generous short obituary. Although biographers have attempted to portray his sons as well-educated landowners and community leaders, the evidence points to the contrary. Virginia and Elizabeth Earp could not even write their names — a holdover from their Kentucky upbringing which set them apart from most women in Monmouth. The Earps rented land as long as they could — probably until the land was sold to more affluent newcomers — then became drovers, gardeners and day-laborers. In short, they were respectable but poor. One notorious exception ran a saloon, to the scandal of relatives attending the Methodist Church on East First Avenue between 1st and 2nd Streets, very near Francis Earp's home. The Earps belonged to societies for social improvement, but they were followers, not leaders. Despite their numbers, they were rarely mentioned in the weekly papers, the *Atlas*, a Whig weekly established in 1846, or the *Review*, a democratic paper founded in the 1850's. A number of Earps, including Wyatt's father, were so dissatisfied with their unpromising situation that they moved to Iowa in the 1850's and later went further west.[3]

The first time a Monmouth newspaper mentioned the Earps who went west was November 4, 1881, in connection with the Gunfight at the OK Corral. Apparently no one realized how famous this event would become: the story was almost hidden at the bottom of page eight of the *Review*, far

overshadowed by the impending visit of Col. Cody and his Buffalo Bill stage show. The writer concluded the article with the comment, "The Marshall Earp (Virgil) and his brothers . . . are sons of Nicholas Earp, formerly one of the early settlers of Monmouth, who moved to Missouri just before the war." It was actually Pella, Iowa, not Missouri. The mistake is trivial, but it reveals that by 1881 people no longer remembered where Nicholas Earp had lived at any given moment. Subsequently, the newspapers seems to have noted only deaths (Virgil in 1905 and Nicholas in 1907).

On July 11, 1911, a *Review* story reported that Wyatt was in trouble with the law and commented: "Wyatt . . . has a number of relatives and friends here and they are reluctant to believe that he would be party to a stick-up game." This is commendable family loyalty, considering that it is unlikely that any of them had seen him since 1859. Reports of a supposed marriage to a Monmouth girl and a 1868 visit to his grandfather are false.

The week before Wyatt died in 1929, an Associated Press reporter making a tour of Illinois towns prepared a story which appeared on page eight of *Review-Atlas* on January 16. He mentioned only Ralph Greenleaf, the billiards champion, and the Great Nicola, the magician, as prominent former citizens. The *Review-Atlas* did have a story on page one about Wyatt's death on January 13 but did not mention his birthplace. The editor noted Wyatt's efforts to get into the movies but gave more prominence to the scandal at the Sharkey-Fitzsimmons fight, when Wyatt, acting as referee, had declared the fight forfeited for a low blow no one else had seen. Suspicions were voiced that Wyatt had protected the interests of his many gambling friends. It seemed that the boxing term, a "Wyatt Earp" (refering to a phantom low blow), was going to be the "gunman's" enduring contribution to American culture.

This anonymity changed radically in 1931 after the publication of Stuart Lake's best-selling *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal.* Hugh Moffett noted in the *Review-Atlas* on May 5, 1944, that he had a copy of the book and recommend it. Frank Phillips, Dean of Men at Monmouth College, used it as the basis for a popular after-dinner lecture. Even so, the quest for Wyatt Earp's birthplace did not become a matter of controversy until 1956, after Stuart Lake's television series had made Wyatt Earp into a household name. Almost immediately people began to ask, "Wasn't Wyatt Earp born in Monmouth?" The search for the birthplace began. Ralph Eckley, a reporter and columnist for the *Review-Atlas* caused attention to be focused on a house which had stood at 213 S. 3rd but was moved sometime after 1852 to the southeast corner of 6th Street and First Avenue, then later to its present location at 913 South 6th Street. Eckley. a native son whose career began in 1923, never missed an opportunity to learn something about Monmouth's past and turn his discoveries into stories. Having interviewed local residents who traced their information about the birthplace to George Bennett Earp (1848-1937. son of James) and Frank Earp (1858-1943, son of Francis), Eckley then used courthouse

The house once owned by Josiah Earp and long thought to be Wyatt Earp's birthplace, now at 913 S. 6th, Monmouth. Photo by William Urban, 1988.

records to prove that Josiah Earp had lived in that house about the time Wyatt was born.[4] It might be noted that Josiah's wife could have been called "Aunt Betsy," although descendents remember her as "Jane " from her middle name. Years later Ralph Eckley conducted a second round of interviews. Although he remained persuaded that his orginial decision was correct, some of the people he interviewed dissented, saying that 406 S. 3rd was the true birthplace.[5]

The house at 406 S. 3rd not only lacked the backing of a prominent journalist, but its supporters failed to check the public records, corroborate oral information, or publicize their views in the media. Even so, they made their case sufficiently well that in 1974, when the president of the Warren County Historical Society, Gertrude Smith, was asked to provide a list of local places for the *Illinois Historic Landmarks Survey,* she indicated this house as the birthplace.

Those who tried to ascertain the source of the story that Wyatt was born at 406 S. 3rd had difficulties in determining which family was supposed to have been renting the house there in 1848.[6] Some told Ralph Eckley about Nicholas' other brothers or "Aunt Sally," However, those identifications seem to have been false leads. The names of the "brothers" are found only in the next generation. The only Earps who had children born at this time were JOSIAH (1816-1901), JAMES (1818-1893), and SARAH (1827-1902) — unless the census records of 1850 and 1860 are correct in indicating Sarah's daughter, Jeanette, had been born in 1847. It seems that this coincidence of births lies behind one misleading oral tradition favoring Sarah (or Sally) Eby. There is no evidence to connect her with 406 S. 3rd in 1848. The census of 1850 indicates that the Ebys possessed property worth $180, and land records suggest that they lived on East Broadway from 1851 to 1853. In 1853 they purchased lot 5 on Block 38 (corner of S. 4th Avenue and S. 2nd Street) a little more than a block away from 406 S. 3rd (Block 39), but they sold it in 1855. The census of 1860 valued their real estate at $1500. In 1874-75 the city directory located them at 826 S. 3rd.[7] Others connected "Aunt Betsy" Ezell with 406 S. 3rd. (It was only much later that anyone began to refer to "Aunt Lizzie" Ezell.) Melba Matson said that Virginia had walked down to Betsy Ezell's rented house to have her child because Nicholas was in an Army hospital in Mexico at the time.[8] There are three problems to this particular version of Wyatt's birth, each of which merits extensive investigation.

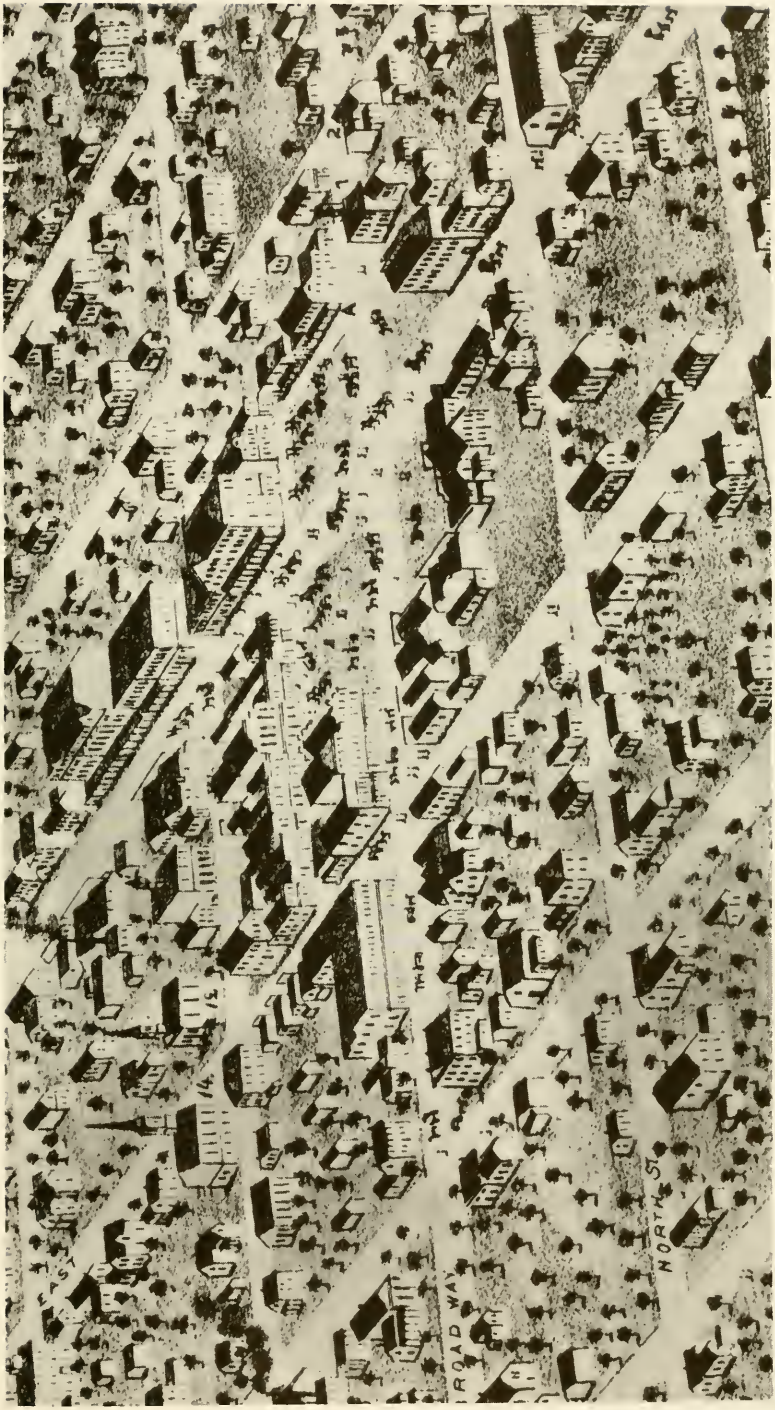
First, Nicholas had returned to Monmouth before Wyatt's birth. Confusion regarding Nicholas' service in the Mexican War has arisen as the result of no one having read the Monmouth *Atlas* carefully enough. This newspaper shows that the Earps were originally opposed to the war. As Whigs they believed that the war was unjust and illegal (a position held by Abraham Lincoln). Walter and Lorenzo signed a Whig anti-war statement printed in the *Atlas* January 29, 1847. In the spring, however, the recently widowed Wyatt Berry Stapp began to raise a company of volunteers for the Monmouth Dragoons. The *Atlas* of June 11 described a proposed Fourth of

July picnic which was to be an occasion for recruiting men. Nicholas Earp was on the planning committee. The *Atlas* issues of August 27 and October 1 listed the volunteers who had marched away early in the month to Quincy, whence they presumably travelled by boat to St. Louis and then to New Orleans. Listed among them was Nicholas Earp, 3rd Sergeant. He took along an $80 horse and $14.75 worth of equipment.

For months local citizens had no news of these one hundred volunteers. They followed the scant accounts of the progress of Scott's campaign at Vera Cruz, not knowing whether they fared well or ill. In January of 1848, without any warning, Lt. George C. Lanphere and Ezekiel Kent returned home. Both were too sick to tell what was happening in Mexico, but on January 28 a letter from the Dragoons was printed in the *Atlas*, recounting how the Dragoons had accompanied a wagon train from Vera Cruz to Jalapa November 19 to 22 and on the third day, while Wyatt Berry Stapp was in command, Mexican guerrillas had ambushed the train, killing one man and wounding another. A second letter (dated December 22, printed Feb. 4) listed the Dragoons who were lying ill in Jalapa and others who had "colds and coughs." Nicholas Earp was not mentioned in this letter, which at first glance is surprising because Nicholas' service records say that he was "sick in hospital at Vera Cruz" in January and February. However, when we see that the service record goes on to say that he "died in Hospital Jalapa," we know that this information was all incorrect. The February 11 *Atlas* contained a letter saying that the company was "very much scattered" and another dated December 25 saying that Shippey, Earp, Coe, Hogue, James Mitchell, and Kent were in Vera Cruz. Below the letter was an editor's *Nota Bene* that Earp was at home!

Nicholas' pension application said that his unit "was sent to Madicane to brake up a band of gurillas had a skermish with them on our Return back to Vera Cruz." He was discharged in the port city of Vera Cruz on December 24, 1847. He had gone by ship to New Orleans, then come north by steamboat to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis. Kent had come home immediately by a direct route and expired shortly afterward. Shippey died February 1 in St. Louis. Nicholas Earp arrived in Monmouth just as the February 11th issue was going to press. Thus he was home to name his son Wyatt Stapp Earp, in honor of his captain. What was his injury? In 1877 Nicholas sought a disability pension for a mule kick in the groin. The petition was denied, but he received an additional three months pay. Nicholas was not permanently incapacitated (he had four more children), but he was not interviewed by the editor about his experiences nor active in recruiting replacements. A year later he left Monmouth for Pella, Iowa, a community only recently founded by 800 Dutch immigrants.[9]

Nicholas' presence in Monmouth would not necessary prove that Virginia had had her child at her own home. It may provide an argument that Virginia felt it necessary to go elsewhere to bear her child in order not to disturb her invalid husband. However, the traditional story (which has her living with relatives during Nicholas' absence) is clearly in error about



Downtown Monmouth in 1869. The home of Nicholas Earp from 1845-49 is in the lower center with two people standing in front of it.

Nicholas being in Mexico. Furthermore, the walk to the birthplace is a recent innovation.

The second point to investigate is when the house at 406 S. 3rd (lot 4, Block 39) was built. Courthouse records show that Ivory Quinby bought lots 3 and 4 for $250 in September of 1846 (vol. 11, p. 473) and sold them to Thompson Chapman on March 4, 1853, for $200. These prices are too low for two lots and a two-story house. (No one who dealt with Ivory Quinby would ever accuse him of not knowing the value of property.) It was also the case that local prices were rising, causing one to expect an increase in value during these years, not a decrease. In 1851 a group of Monmouth citizens had arranged for the railroad line west from Peoria to pass through Monmouth. When the track reached Monmouth in 1855, a new commercial center sprang up around the loading yard, raising the value of property in the area. The storage buildings, mercantile offices, and drinking establishments can be clearly seen on the 1869 "birdseye view" of Monmouth along the 500 and 600 blocks of South 3rd street.

Thompson Chapman's family provides important oral testimony in the birthplace controversy. According to tax and census records, Chapman was a "graindealer" who had come to Monmouth in 1845. (Obituary information provided by the family said 1847. *Review,* March 15, 1892, p. 4.) The term "grain dealer" did not indicate wealth and social standing. Like Francis Earp, also a "grain dealer," he was sometimes a farmer renting land and sometimes a laborer. According to the census of 1860, Chapman was born in Kentucky in 1816. One of his children was born in Indiana in 1849 and two more born there after 1853. This raises a question as to whether he was living in Monmouth continuously through this period. We do know that 1853 to 1858 he owned lots 3 and 4 on block 39.

It was common practice to buy lots back to back so the property extended from street to street. For example, lots 1 and 2 sold for $103 in 1839 (vol. 10, p. 460, recorded 1843) and $300 in 1852 (vol. 17, p. 387). Lot 1 sold in 1857 with another unrelated property for $100. Lots 5 and 6 sold for $150 on January 16, 1848 (vol. 13, p. 300) and $500 in 1884 (vol. 71, p. 438). The 1869 map shows houses on each lot.

Tax records show the situation more clearly. Note the following assessment values of the lots on block 39.[10]

Collectors' Assessment of Lots on Block 39

Note that * = actual sale price. Assessments are merely judgments for tax purposes, often one-half to one-third of expected market prices. Actual prices and US Census estimates allow us to calculate the true value of each lot. Note also that lots 5 and 6 were owned by one family, with the result that assessors often looked on them as a unit or were careless about which lot they assessed higher.

Construction dates appear clearly, as on lot 2: William Chapman took a $500 mortgage May 1, 1872 (Mort. Book 13, p. 151) to build a house. He repaid $100 annually with 8% interest. The assessment increase of 1873 may reflect the three-fold general increase made that year but the 1874 assessment was even higher, not lower, as was the case for most property in the city.

SECOND STREET

LOT 6	LOT 3	LOT 2
		1839 $103* (+ 1)
1846 $150	1846 $ 75	1846 $ 50
	1846 $250* (with 4)	
1848 $150* (+5)	1848 $ 75	1848 $100
1850 $300 (+5).....	..US CENSUS.....	1850 $280 (+ 1)
1852 $100	1852 $ 40	1852 $125
		1852 $300* (+ 1)
1853 $100	1853 $ 40	1853 $125
	1853 $200* (with 4)	
1857 $300	1857 $150	1857 $350
	1858 $600*	
1860 $200	1860 $200	1860 $250
1861 $200	1861 $200	1861 $250
	1864 $175	1864 $200
		1864 $250*
1866 $200	1866 $320	1866 $280
1867 $105	1867 $375	1867 $275
1868 $190	1868 $200	1868 $200
1869 $205	1869 $200	1869 $200
1871 $ 80	1871 $200	1871 $140
1872 $ 70	1872 $200	1872 $130
1873 $600	1873 $350	1873 $300
1874 $600 (+5)	1874 $250	1874 $350
1875 $550 (+5)	1875 $250	1875 $350
1880 $ 70	1880 $200	1880 $300
1885 $350	1885 $100	1885 $300
1889 $ 50	1889 $100	1889 $200

LOT 5	LOT 4 ("birthplace")	LOT 1
		1839 $103* (+ 2)
1846 $150	1846 $ 200	1846 $ 50
	1846 $ 250* (+ 3)	
1848 $100	1848 $ 200	1848 $ 40
1848 $150* (+ 6)		
1852 $100	1852 $ 150	1852 $ 40
		1852 $300* (+ 2)
1853 $250	1853 $ 150	1853 $ 40
	1853 $ 200* (+ 3)	1857 $100* (+ other)
1857 $500	1857 $ 500	1857 $150
1860 $400	1860 $ 400	1860 $125
	1860 $1200 . US CENSUS .	1860 $100
1861 $400	1861 $ 400	1861 $125
1864 $500 (+ 6?)	1864 $ 600	1864 $100
	1864 $ 950*	1865 $300*
	1865 $4500* (+ 1)	
1866 $480	1866 $ 800	1866 $120
1867 $450	1867 $ 900	1867 $170
1868 $450	1868 $ 950	1867 $160
1869 $400	1869 $ 900	1868 $150
1871 $300	1871 $ 600	1871 $140
1872 $290	1872 $ 590	1872 $130
1873 $140	1873 $1700	1873 $400
1874 $600 (+ 6)	1874 $ 700	1874 $450
1875 $550 (+ 6)	1875 $ 650	1875 $500
1880 $300	1880 $ 650	1880 $100
1885 $ 60	1885 $ 600	1885 $100
		1885 $600*
1889 $300	1889 $ 600	1889 $100
	$1200*	
1893 $ 40	1893 $ 320	1893 $100
1895 $200 (+ 6)	1895 $ 300	1895 $100
1900 $200 (+ 6)	1900 $ 300	1900 $700

THIRD STREET

Although there was a state formula to provide for accurate assessment, assessors consistently understated the true value of every lot. Despite this shortcoming, the estimates are predictable. They assessed empty lots at nearly full market value ($30-40 in the 1840's and $75-100 in the 1860's) and lots with houses at about half actual sale prices. Knowing this, we can use this chart in combination with the birdseye map of 1869 to determine where houses were standing at any given time and make an estimate of their size. For example, the increase in the assessment of lot 3 between

1853 and 1857 and the $600 price that William Smith paid for the property in 1858 (vol. 29, p. 274) are two dependable indications that Thompson Chapman had built a house on that property. Similarly, the tax records for lot 4 show that he made an even more substantial improvement there. Without question, he needed a bigger house: census records show that Thompson Chapman had seven children in 1860. Mrs. Martha Chapman Lentz, one of the principal figures in the oral testimony, wrote Weldon Earp in 1972, saying that her grandfather, William Thompson. "built the house that I believe still stands in Monmouth." While this seems to indicate that William Chapman (b. 1840) assisted his father in building the two-story house, it would be very easy to confuse this with the house he later built on lot 2.[11]

On April 9, 1864 Thompson Chapman sold lot 4 to David Van Winkle for $950 (Deed book, vol. 40, p. 2) and moved to lot 2 of Block 41 (assessed value 1867, $190). Van Winkle, a thirty-year-old liveryman, assumed a $2000 mortgage, then bought lot 1 for $300 (vol. 36, p. 512). In 1865 he sold lots 1 and 4 together for $4500 to his father-in-law. Wilson Sheldon (vol. 43, p. 133). These somewhat confusing facts are of vital importance. We shall return to them after looking further at the analysis of the collectors' records.

The low assessments for lots 1, 2, and 3 are partly attributable to the fact that they were subject to periodic flooding. William Barrow may have lived on lot 2 between 1843 and 1852, but the tax information indicates an empty lot. In contrast, without much question small houses stood on lots 4, 5, and 6 by 1846. When we compare these tax assessments with assessments elsewhere in Monmouth and confirm them by actual sale prices, we see how small those houses must have been. For example, the Woodworth house (still standing at 300 East Archer, lot 5, Block 4, and featured in a picture as early as 1860) is comparable in age and size to the museum house, though not nearly as well-built. It was assessed at $350 in 1848, $250 in 1853, $500 in 1857; it sold (with two side lots) for $375 in 1846, $1250 in 1857 and 1859, and $2450 in 1867. The Swinney house (221 S. 4th, lot 8, Block 28) was a two-room house in 1844 when it was assessed at $200. Its enlargement caused the assessment to rise to $700 in 1859. Lot 3 of Block 27 (Josiah's former home) was assessed at $40 in 1846 and $250 in 1854; in 1861, the present dwelling was assessed at $350. Holt House, which was built in the early 1850's, was a two-story, five-room structure when it sold for $400 in 1856 (vol. 26, p. 710). When we compare the tax assessments and sale prices of these houses to those for lot 4 (406 S. 3rd), we must conclude that there was no two-story house on the latter site as late as 1853. In 1857, however, the assessment value of lot 4 was in line with the other houses.

The assessed value of lot 4 declined somewhat in 1860 and 1861, then increased in 1864. This may reflect Civil War inflation. (The price of lumber doubled and the cost of labor went up 60%.) However, this would not explain the discrepancy between the price paid for the property in 1864,

when Chapman sold lot 4 for $950, and 1865, when Van Winkle sold it with lot 1 for $4500! Since an empty lot usually sold for about $100, the house standing on lot 4 in 1864 was worth $850. A year later with $300 subtracted from $4500 for the price of lot 1 in addition to $100 for lot 4, the house was worth $4100. While transactions between relatives do not always reflect true market conditions, the great difference between $850 and $4100 suggests that Van Winkle did more than add the south wing onto the original house.

Van Winkle had probably intended from the beginning to build a retirement home for Wilson and Sarah Sheldon. Born in 1808, Wilson Sheldon had settled near Berwick in 1837. A cattle dealer, he had been the first man to build loading pens and ship animals from Monmouth. Although he had made himself wealthy by 1865, Sheldon had also so undermined his health that he retired from agriculture and moved into Monmouth. There he was a pillar of the Baptist Church and the business community. His home reflected his high status in local society. When he passed away suddenly but not unexpectedly in the midst of his large family in September of 1873, his death "cast a gloom over the entire community." Sarah Sheldon continued to live in the home until her death March 30, 1888.[12]

The assessment records listed above show a major change in the assessor's evaluation of the property in 1873, but that figure reflects only that year's 310% general property tax increase. In 1874 there was a 6% reduction in city property valuation. Either William Sheldon or his widow seems to have made a successful appeal of the assessment, since the 1874 levy was only slightly higher than it had been in 1872. Thus, tax records suggest that the house was built in 1853-57 or 1864-65.

Other sources of information support the legal records. The county histories of 1877, 1886, 1903, and 1927 listed houses in Monmouth then standing which dated from the 1840's and even the early 1850's. Although Wilson Sheldon had been a prominent man, his house was never included in these lists.

Stylistic analysis yields mixed results. There were Greek revival homes in Monmouth before 1848. However, the only Greek elements at 406 S. 3rd are broken pediments in the roof line, a detail popular through the 1860's. Ironically, once the house acquired its south wing, it was very similar to the house built at 213 S. 3rd after Josiah's house was moved away. The 1869 map shows the house virtually as it is today, except that a lean-to abutted the west wall. The basement and foundations of the north part of the structure are of stone and the house itself sits on heavy beams, but these characteristics were not unusual. The interior of the south wing contain elements common to the 1890's. The house has been recently covered with siding. State officials who inspected the building in 1986 declined to date it from the decade of Wyatt's birth.[13]

The third point to investigate is whether the Ezell family rented a house on lot 4 in 1848. No one knows where the Ezells lived before 1849. The

chain of logic ran like this: the Ezells must have been renting; Wyatt was born at his aunt's; 406 S. 3rd has been identified as the birthplace; hence, the house standing there now MUST have been the birthplace. There is an important variation of this story told by descendants of Susan Francis Ezell and William Chapman, who were married in 1863.[14] Their story is that Thompson Chapman purchased the birthplace and that William Thompson helped build a house on that site. (Perhaps he helped build it 1853-57?) As we have seen (ft. 11), the oral tradition here is probably confusing two houses. However, the tradition is important because William Thompson moved west and, consequently, his descendants' story was not influenced by the local debate over the birthplace.[15]

What did Monmouth citizens know? Mrs. Anna Stratton, who lived at 406 S. 3rd from 1941 until recently, heard that Wyatt Earp had been born in her home from Alfred Earp (Josiah's son, b. 1852), who bought groceries from their store at 502 S. 3rd until his death in 1942, and from a stranger named Parker. Mrs. Effie Earp Cramer, who has done extensive research on the family genealogy, also heard the story from "Uncle Alfred." However, friends of Frank and George Bennett Earp remembered their having said that Wyatt was born at 213 S. 3rd. Other Earp relatives say that they had never heard anything about the matter.[16]

The controversy over the two potential birthplaces had come to a standstill by 1980 when William Urban located Nicholas' home at the corner of Archer and First Street.[17] Nicholas had bought this property for $450 in 1845 and sold it for $300 in March of 1849. Until this time Josiah's home had been the most prominently mentioned birthplace. Urban suggested that it was not logical for Virginia to move into Josiah's crowded household with her already numerous family when she had a house of her own. This house also appears on the 1869 map, a tiny two-story structure seemingly smaller than either of the two still existing birthplace homes. The intent of the article, however, was not so much to locate Wyatt's birthplace as to demonstrate that Nicholas Earp had brought his family back to Monmouth in 1856 and did not return to Pella until late 1859. This article clarified numerous problems about the family, such as how Nicholas' daughter Martha could have died in Monmouth May 26, 1856, how Virginia could be born in Illinois February 28, 1858, and why two sons returned to Monmouth in 1861 to enlist in Civil War units. Urban also showed that Nicholas was among the founders of the Republican Party in Monmouth.[18] Urban's article did not offer proof of the location of Wyatt's birth, but it offered reasons for scepticism regarding the local oral tradition: if no one could remember that Nicholas had returned to Monmouth in 1856 and that Wyatt had probably attended school with his cousins and his friends from age eight to eleven, then why should anyone remember the house of his birth?

Even in the days of the television series, Monmouth had never done more than dedicate a plaque in the park to Wyatt's memory. There was little conviction that Monmouth had ever contributed much to the for-

mation of his character. Later the town had mixed feelings about Wyatt's having abandoned his second wife, about the combative personality of the third wife, Josephine Marcus, who was apparently a dance-hall employee and girl-friend of Sheriff Behan (the Earps' principal political enemy in Tombstone), and about Wyatt's exaggerated gunfighting exploits.

Wyatt himself has provided no detailed information, but we cannot rely on an argument based on silence. Late in his life Wyatt was not much of a talker. Everyone who knew him then remarked on his taciturn, even dour manner (which should raise some scepticism about the romantic rhetoric of Stuart Lake's supposed interviews). One former Henderson county resident who spoke with Wyatt several times in 1926 wrote the following account:

> "I had a relatively easy time locating a place that Wyatt was known to spend a lot of time at. . . . From then on it was easy to be there at the time Wyatt was. However, getting acquainted was something else! The man I had pointed out to me was definitely in his 80s, about 5'8", 165 lbs., in a conservative but expensive gray suit, 'boiled shirt' and a large horseshoe diamond stickpin with a chain. He always stepped back and waited modestly when a customer came in. . . . The conversation was never detoured into the adventurous days, as much as I wanted to! It was confined to real estate. I recall he said when I asked his advice on investing. Answer: "Never buy outside the city limits." . . . I did tell Mr. Earp that I came from the Warren County area. He stated he lived there until his middle teens. Also, that while his father and elder brothers were away to the Civil War that he tended 90 acres of corn that they had planted before leaving. This was hard to believe, because at that time there were only walking one-row cultivators, and 20-25 acres is all one man and team could cultivate and "lay by." As I recall, he described the land in corn as being 4 miles west of Monmouth on what I believe was on the north side of the road. They had rented the land. However, I know from experience that even a 40-acre field, when in it with a team and a walking 'Jenny Lind' cultivator, looks like an ocean."[19]

Although interest in the birthplace was moribund during the Susquicentennial and the subsequent formation of a group to look into historic preservation, in March of 1985, a Western Illinois Regional Studies Conference held at Monmouth College featured a talk on the Wyatt Earp legend by Knox professor Rodney Davis.[20] When reporters asked local citizens for reactions to the talk, they discovered that people were more interested in the location of the birthplace than the wisdom of representing Wyatt Earp as a role model for youth.[21] Public debate began not long afterwards, when Robert and Melba Matson bought the house at 406 S. 3rd and began to publicize it as the birthplace and museum.

What is the true story of Wyatt Earp's birthplace? Unfortunately, as is so often the case in historical controversies, one story balances out another, one believer confronts another, and conclusive proof remains out of reach. This much is fact:

1. Wyatt may have been born at his Aunt Lizzie's in a house later owned by

Thompson Chapman. However, Nicholas Earp's return from Mexico in February 1848 undermines the tradition that Virginia was living with relatives during his absence.

2. The house now standing at 406 S. 3rd Street was probably built between 1853 and 1857, but could date from 1864-65. The price Van Winkle received for the house may be a reflection of a father-in-law's generosity, but it was also an appropriate sum for a retirement home of a man like Wilson Sheldon.

3. No one claims that anything other than the birth of Wyatt Earp happened at either 213 or 406 S. 3rd. As an infant his home would have been that of his parents at Archer and 1st Street. Between 1856 and early 1859 he would have lived in one of the houses standing today at 409 or 411 South B Street. (Since his father was a Republican, he probably heard Abraham Lincoln speak on South 1st Street in 1858, and possibly Stephen Douglas as well.) From early 1859 until December, he lived in the house built by Daniel McNeil at the corner of Broadway and 5th (just east of his cabin and first home which were later torn down to make room for the Carr mansion).

4. Research on Nicholas' life indicates that Stuart Lake's history is unreliable. Local memory regarding him is practically non-existent beyond the dispute over Wyatt's birthplace.

5. The personal lives of Nicholas Earp's sons were extremely tangled and unconventional. Their marital complications were such as to lend credence even to malicious gossip about them. Some of the stories about Wyatt and his brothers reflect interfamily quarrels.[22] Similarly, the local differences of opinion about Wyatt's authentic birthplace reflect, in part, disputes among relatives.

The situation does not lend itself to dispassionate analysis. Some local residents yearn for authentic national heroes. They believe that Wyatt Earp is one who should be honored by his home town. Others believe that the reputation of the Earps should be exploited for tourist dollars.[23] Others enjoy recreating historic events and talking about famous people. In short, there are valid reasons for individuals to be concerned about where Wyatt Earp was born.

This article should not discourage anyone from participating in activities or supporting institutions honoring Wyatt Earp. That is a matter of personal choice. Just as theater groups, softball leagues, the city band and ice cream socials enliven summer evenings in Monmouth, so Wyatt Earp activities offer diversion and entertainment to citizens and visitors. Moreover, the Birthplace Museum has potential educational value as well. It complements the outstanding displays of the historical museum in Roseville and, in contrast to the restored mansions originally erected by very wealthy Monmouth citizens, illustrates how the solid middle-class lived a century and a quarter earlier.[24] On the other hand, individuals should be free to criticize whatever they feel lacks taste or historical

accuracy. In the best of all possible worlds this would lead to compromises which satisfy all parties.

NOTES

[1]"Letter to Editor," *Review-Atlas*, May 30, 1986; "400 Mark Earp Birthday," *Review-Atlas*, March, 1987, p. 7; "Matsons receive honor," *Review-Atlas*, March 23, 1988, p. 12; Carol Clark, "Signs for Wyatt Earp Museum to be installed," *Register-Mail* (Galesburg, IL), March 9, 1988, p. A5; "Letter to Editor," *Review-Atlas*, May 7, 1988, p. 2; *Review-Atlas*, May 26, 1988, p. 7: "Special events this year include Western Weekends, a Pioneer Christmas Walk, an O.K. Corral Reenactment, Ranch Buffet and Show, Arts/Crafts, Flea Market and Square/Western dancing on Saturdays."

Contrasting the 1922 celebration, with its pageant of Lincoln's visit and Monmouth's role in the Civil War, to the Sesquicentennial and its non-historical bank robbery, tells much about the changing concept of history. Wyatt Earp was never mentioned in 1922. Even in 1939, the "Old Timer" (Hugh Moffett), whose career reached back into the 1880's, had no interest in or information about Wyatt's birth. *Review-Atlas*, August 22, 1939. Nor he did even mention Wyatt on the centenary of his birth in 1948.

[2]Ralph Eckley, "How Wyatt managed to acquire a second wife," *Review-Atlas* (Monmouth, IL), August 7, 1984, p. 4; Nicholas constantly sought government pensions, claiming even to have served in the Black Hawk War. Ralph Eckley, *Review-Atlas*, Jan. 30, 1953; William Urban, "Wyatt Earp's Father," *True West*, 36(May 1989), #5, pp. 30-32, 37-39.

[3]Earp families living in Monmouth in 1848 (with their ages calculated from the 1850 Census) were as follows: The patriarch of the family, WALTER Earp (63) and his wife (54) lived with their son JAMES (30). James' property was valued by the census of 1850 at only $40, the cost of an empty lot. His obituary (Moffett book VI, 23) indicated that he came to Monmouth later than his brothers (JONATHAN remained in Kentucky). James' family included his wife Parthene (24) and children Sarah (7), Lorenzo (4), Dillos (2), George Bennett (born 1848 in Monmouth). They seem to have lived at what is today South B street. By 1860 their property was worth $1300, indicating the existence of a house.

NICHOLAS Earp (35) and Virginia (27) had Newton (11), James (5), Virgil (4), and Martha (3). LORENZO (39) and Nancy (33) Earp had Peter (13), Walter (12), Philip (10), Mary (8), William (6), Mariah (4), and Jonathan was on the way (b. Dec. 27, 1848). Their address is not known, but the location of the household in the census was widely separated from the others, indicating a country residence (which could still well be within the present city boundary). FRANCIS (27) and Mary (28) Earp lived at what is now South 2nd Street and East First Ave with Sarah (4), Martha (1), and WALTER C. Earp (24) and his daughter Martha (1). JOSIAH (29) and Elizabeth Jane (22) Earp lived at 213 South 3rd Street with Francis (8) and Louise (3), with Jonathan apparently on the way (July 31, 1848, although the census of 1850 suggests 1847), and seventy-year-old woman, unidentified as to family relationship, Sarah English.

Two of Walter Earp's married daughters lived in town. ELIZABETH (37) and Greenberry Ezell (41) had Martha Ann (15), Nancy (13), Jonah (11), Sarah (9), Mary (7), and Susan (5). SARAH Ann (20, sometimes called Sally) and Andrew Eby (22) had been married May 7, 1847. Their daughter Jeanetta was born April 5, 1848. Andrew's

obituary (Moffett book, IX, p. 89) indicates that he had managed the Olmstead Mill north of town before his marriage, then became a cooper like Nicholas.

See *Three Generations of Descendents of Walter Earp* for an Earp genealogy (with some errors and some information deliberately suppressed) and many scattered pieces of useful information in *Data on the Earp Family* collected by Mrs. William Irvine and donated to the Illinois State Historical Society in 1958; also *Family History of Effie Sarah Jane Cramer* in the Warren County Library.

For the common practice of renting land, Margaret Bogue, *Patterns from the sod; land use and tenure in the Grand Prairie 1850-1900* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1959).

[4]Stuart Lake, *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside, 1931) is the source of most of Monmouth citizens' knowledge about Wyatt's early years. Yet this information is very inaccurate. For example, Wyatt may have returned to Monmouth in 1868 (p. 29), but not to visit his grandfather (who had died in 1853). Shortly afterward Wyatt, several brothers, and his father settled in Lamar, Missouri, where Nicholas' brother, Jonathan, was living. Glenn Boyer, "Those Marryin' Earp Men," *True West* (April 11, 1976), pp. 14-21, 36. There he married Urilla Sutherland in January of 1870 (the US Census for Lamar township of Barton County, lists him as a farmer with real estate worth $75 and $100 of personal property). He was 22, "Rilla" was 21. The census taker noted they had been married in January. Nicholas was a grocer with $1200 in real estate and $425 personal property); Ralph Eckley, *Review-Atlas*, February 10, 1956, cited Roy Buckley as a source for George B. Earp's story. On February 13, Ralph Eckley had a longer story based on B. L. Gillette's conversation with the late Frank Earp. He also interviewed a descendent of Sally Ann Eby, John Kneen, who lived at 205 S. 4th, but was only able to "Get Fine Story of the Wife of Walter Earp," *Review-Atlas,* February 16, 1956, p. 2. He found another indirect witness in Harry Giles' father. Ralph Eckley, "Wyatt Earp information uncovered by Monmouth College professor," *Review-Atlas,* August 15, 1980, and "Wyatt Earp was born in Monmouth," *Review-Atlas,* August 6, 1984. Land records do not help resolve the matter. According to the census of 1850, Josiah owned no property. On May 15, 1851, Josiah filed on this lot and paid the fee of $12.50! (Deed book, vol. 17, p. 415). Walter Earp notarized the payment. In October of 1852, however, William Barrows of Perry, Ohio, gave his lawyer the right to sell this lot and lots 1 and 2 of Block 39 and other properties as well. (Was this the same William Barrow who had lived in Monmouth in 1850 with property worth $280? Had Walter and Josiah noted his departure and filed on his land? October 20 Josiah sold his claim for $250 (vol. 17, p. 407) and moved into Henderson county, where he rented farmland.

[5]Interview with Mrs. Anna Stratton, February 12, 1986, which laid stress on Mr. Eckley's interest as to whether a door had ever existed in the north wall. (It has since been discovered but not opened.) The same information came in a letter from Mrs. Effie Cramer, March 6, 1986. In the associated press story by Bill Vogrin, "Earp birthplace controversy makes state-wide headlines," *Review-Atlas,* March 29, 1988, p. 1, there is an accusation that Ralph Eckley wrote the story about the 213 S. 3rd house in 1956 after he was scooped by a rival newspaper. However, articles about the birthplace had been appearing earlier. See Quad Cities *Times Democrat,* March 1, 1953, p. 3D, which featured the house at 213 S. 3rd.

[6]Ralph Eckley, "Earp story is recalled," *Review-Atlas,* May 30, 1972, p. 4: "After

firemen went to to the Stratton home, 406 South Third Street, Thursday afternoon there came a call — wasn't that the house where Wyatt Earp was born? A reporter who has done a lot of digging about Monmouth's famed native had to answer 'No.' However, it does appear that there was a link in the 'Old Days' with a house at that address and the Earp family . . . Apparently another of the Earps, either Joseph or Joshua lived in the location of the Stratton house, but records show that Ivory Quinby owned the property from 1846 to 1853. He sold it to Thomas Chapman in 1853, and D. Van Winkle bought the lot in 1864 and borrowed $2000 which indicates the existing house probably dates from then. William J. Stratton and wife Ann bought the property May 16, 1941."

[7]Andrew Jackson Eby owned lot 5, B16 from April 25, 1851 to October 4, 1853 (vol. 17, p. 930, and vol. 22, p. 67); purchase of lot 5, B38 (vol. 19, p. 203).

[8]Conversation at the opening of the birthplace museum in March of 1986; Interview with Carol Clark, "Where was Earp born? Historians' ideas differ." *Register Mail*, March 19, 1987, p. A2: "She said that at the time Wyatt was born, hs father was in an Army hospital in Mexico and that his mother, who was alone in the home with four children, walked to the home on 406 S. Third St. for the birth of son Wyatt." Larry Fruhling, "Earp's birth site has town in a quandary." Des Moines *Sunday Register* (April 10, 1988), p. 1, 10A: "Matson maintains that Nicholas, a soldier in the Mexican War, was in a hospital in Vera Cruz, recovering from a mule kick, in January and February 1848, and so could not have been back in Monmouth in time for Wyatt's birth on March 19."

The *Review-Atlas*, July 27, 1988, contained a letter noting that Aunt Lizzie Ezell could not be confused with Josiah's wife because she would have been called Jane. This may be true, but descendents did not remember it: Mrs. Lentz (cited also in footnote 15) as late as November 18, 1980, was writing the *Review-Atlas*, asking for information about family names, and one local relative wrote about having visited "Aunt Betsy." (Mrs. Irvine, p. 73)

Wyatt Earp editor Glenn Boyer has said that 406 S. 3rd is the birthplace. *Review Atlas*, July 22, 1988, p. 1, and *Register-Mail*, August 6, 1988, p. 1 (with Boyer's corrections of errors in letter section, August 20, p. A4); although Boyer's statement is an interference beyond the evidence in his possession that Wyatt told his third wife that he had been told he was born at Aunt Lizzie's, his information must be taken seriously.

[9]Mexican War Records of Nicholas Earp from the National Archives, 1877 and 1893, (Mrs. Irvine, p. 37); some of same in *Adjutant General's Report* (Springfield: Journal Company, 1902), p. 308. Nicholas enlisted in Monmouth on August 6, 1847, was discharged December 24, 1847, Mexico, and mustered out at Alton, Illinois July 26, 1848. The trip from Mexico was not time-consuming. Nicholas made it in less than six weeks. Another man of his company, Samuel Douglas, who was not in the group discharged on December 24, returned on March 11. *Portrait and Biographical Album of Warren County, Illinois* (Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1886), p. 567. Nicholas' war record remains cloudy. He claimed to have served in the Black Hawk War and to have recruited troops in Iowa during the Civil War. There is no record of the former and investigation of the latter is impossible because the Pella newspapers for 1861-64 are missing. When Nicholas left Monmouth in 1849, local officials believed he was going to California and, consequently, sold three lots he had bought at a tax sale on a promisory note July 1, 1846.

[10]The tax records are located in the Regional Collection of the Western Illinois University Library. In 1853, the year the state first required the assessment of property, Monmouth city records show that Thompson Chapman owned lots 3, 4, 5, and 6. This was an error: Chapman paid the taxes on 3 & 4; Clarissa H. Buzan paid for the other two and subsequent assessment records identify her or her husband as the owner of lots 5 and 6.

[11]Land records indicate that William Chapman took out a mortgage May 1, 1872 (Mort. book, vol. 13, p. 151) for $500, promising to repay it $100 annually with 8% interest. That house was on lot 2, not 4, and is probably the house that stands in the middle of the block on East Third Avenue.

Chapman's neighbors had large families, too. Clarissa Holcomb, a widow, lived to the south in 1850 (lots 5 and 6). After she married Irish-born J. L. Buzan, she left the deeds in her name, but allowed her husband to pay the taxes. In 1860 they had eight children living with them. Two of his daughters were living elsewhere as house servants, probably as much to escape the overcrowding as to earn their keep. John Duer, who bought lot 1 in 1857 for $100, had seven children by 1860. In short, the neighborhood was full of youngsters.

The McBride family claimed to have been living just south of the birthplace museum when Wyatt was born. This may not be accurate. The Holcombs became owners of lots 5 and 6 on August 6, 1849 — after Wyatt's birth — and the McBrides seem to trace their story through the Holcomb family. However, the last member of the McBride family could remember the lean-to on the west of 406 which appears in insurance papers and on the 1869 map. (Letter from Effie Earp Cramer, September 14, 1988.) There is a Stephen McBride listed in the 1850 Census only a few households from Thompson Chapman. In the 1860, when Chapman clearly dwelt at 406 S. 3rd, McBride is many pages away. While this seems to undermine the McBride story, one must be very cautious in attempting to deduce any family's location in town from its placement in the census.

[12]*Portrait and Biographical Album*, pp. 531-32, 545; the obituary in the *Review*, September 19, 1873, p. 3, praised Sheldon, saying that his "sterling manhood, his high sense of honor, and his unbending, incorruptible integrity, won for him the confidence and admiration of all those whose privilege it was to be intimate with him;" the *Atlas*, September 19, 1873, p. 3, remarked that he died surrounded by his wife, family, and grandchildren, and that the funeral service filled his home with friends and sympathizers; Sarah's obituary was on page one of the *Review*, April 3, 1888.

David Van Winkle and Alma Sheldon were married September 15, 1857. They had two sons and later moved to Chicago. They were not given a share of Sarah's estate (Will Book 3, p. 307). As she put it: "Alma Van Winkle having received from me already so much of my estate and property as it is my desire she should have."

The later history of 406 S. 3rd is as follows: Sarah Sheldon sold lot 1 in 1885 (vol. 76, p. 383) for $600 and her heirs sold lot 4 in 1889 for $1200 (vol. 75, p. 583). The next owner of lot 4 made various improvements (mortgages of $300 in 1889, $800 in 1892, and $200 in 1986 which stipulated maintaining insurance on the buildings). These improvements do not seem to have been significant: the house sold for only $1000 in 1915.

[13]For the oldest buildings in Monmouth, see *Historical and Biographical Record of Monmouth and Warren County, Illinois* (ed. Luther E. Robinson. Chicago:

Munsell, 1927), pp. 203-207; Carol Clark, "Earp question still unsettled," *Register Mail*, March 18, 1988, p. C1, contains a letter to Alderman George Morris from Theodore W. Hild, deputy state historic preservation officer for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. The key passage runs, "While it is our understanding that there are some buildings in Monmouth that may be associated with Wyatt Earp and the Earp family, we have taken no steps to recognize any of them or to place any of them on the National Register of Historic Places. Moreover, in 1986, we determined that one property locally identified as the Wyatt Earp birthplace or childhood home was not a likely candidate for the National Register because the building had undergone several changes, and because birthplaces are normally not eligible for listing on the National Register, especially if the birthplace is not associated with the individual's major accomplishments or productive years." In the collection of talks sometimes referred to as Wyatt's "Autobiography," there is a description of his birthplace which could fit the house at 406 S. 3rd. However, he does not say where this information came from and it is very important whether he was told what the house looked like or he saw the house standing in the late 1850's or 1868. Wyatt S. Earp, *Wyatt Earp*, ed. Glenn Boyer (Sierra Vista: Bissette, 1981), pp. 3-5.

[14]Greenberry Ezell purchased lot 2 of block 29 in 1849. The census of 1850 valued it at $100, that of 1860 at $350. He died October 20, 1851 of consumption (Moffett, I, 93). His death was a family disaster. He left Elizabeth with an infant son, William, and no means of earning a living except by taking in washing. Daughters Nancy, aged sixteen, and Martha, aged eighteen, married in May and October. His widow sold the lot for $500 in 1867 (vol. 17, p. 826, vol. 52, p. 609, vol. 54, p. 118; Mortgage book 9, p. 532). A small house on this lot appears on the 1869 map. Susan married William Chapman in 1863. Like his father, William Chapman was a Democrat. Monmouth was a stronghold of the Knights of the Golden Circle (a KKK predecessor) and a center of anti-war, anti-administration sentiment. The Copperhead leader, Clement Vallandigham, spoke to a crowd of thousands in Monmouth on October 20, 1864. Despite the rain, the enthusiastic listeners hung on every word for two and a half hours. The *Review* was filled with exhortations to impeach Lincoln and denunciations of supposed plans for mixing the races. Jonathan Earp, who was lost at sea in 1864, received a letter from a friend who had been forced to move by Copperheads who were throwing rocks at his house. (Mrs. Irvine, p. 59) We may wonder if Susan's marriage to a Democrat was popular with Earp relatives who had seven sons in the service of their country.

[15]This testimony is of such importance that it needs to be cited extensively. Mrs. Effie Earp Cramer wrote William Urban on February 20, 1986: "I called Anna Colclasure, . . . Anna's great grandmother was Sarah Earp Eby. Anna said she had never heard that Wyatt was born at her grandmother's home." It should be noted that this oral tradition emphasizes that Wyatt was born at a 406 S. 3rd house, not that he was born with a relative. Mrs. Cramer continued, "I am convinced that 406 S. Third is the house in which Wyatt was born. You asked who said what and when. I can't answer exactly when Uncle Alfred said Wyatt was born there, but I believe it was in the early 1930's. Uncle Alfred died Dec. 24, 1942 at the age of 90. I still believe Wyatt was born there and assumed, of course, Nicholas lived there, also." In another letter on March 6, she reiterated, "My Uncle Alfred said Wyatt was born at 406 S. Third St. . . . I will always believe that my uncle was right, and that Wyatt was born at 406 S. Third Street, although I have no idea why he was born there or who

lived there at the time." She repeats this in "Earp Relative notes birthplace," *Review-Atlas*, March 21, 1988, p. 1. Mrs. Martha Chapman Lentz wrote Weldon Earp on March 29, 1972, asking about genealogical information. She said, "All I know is that my great-grandfather and Wyatt had the same grandmother Earp." She could not remember the Earp family names but she was sure that "My own grandfather was William Chapman who built the house that I believe still stands in Monmouth." On April 10, 1986, she wrote Effie Earp Cramer, "My father was a very quiet man and didn't talk a great deal about too much of his past but we always grew up as youngsters knowing the house my Great Grandfather had lived in or rather owned in 1853 had been the birthplace of Wyatt Earp whose father and my Great Grandfather had been brother and sisters." Neighbors born in the 20th century say they have always heard that Wyatt was born at 406 S. 3rd but have no knowledge of how it happened that Virginia Earp was there. By the summer of 1988 Mrs. Lentz had come to agree with her cousins that Wyatt was born in Lizzie Ezell's house at 406 S. 3rd and was joined in that opinion by Glenn Boyer, an editor of Earp family memoirs. Ralph Eckhardt, *Review-Atlas*, July 22. (This is an article of questionable value: the reporter attributed statements to the writer of this article without having interviewed him.)

[16]In the February 12, 1986, interview with Mrs. Anna Stratton to clarify an interview by Ace Cecka in the *Register Mail* about thirty years ago. There was a long discussion about the early houses on that block, including two small and very old buildings on the next lot, where Mrs. McCoy had lived. Mrs. Stratton considered George Bennett Earp an unreliable source. Ralph Eckley (footnote #4) obviously disagreed. George owned antlers from a stag shot in front of his lot in 1844 and took an interest in the early history of the town. Weldon Earp, who is uniformly omitted from lists of Earp cousins, said simply, "This is a mess." Barnaby Dinges, "Showdown. Wyatt Earp's birthplace spurs controversy," Peoria *Journal Star*, March 27, 1988, p. A1-2, and Bill Vogrin, "Earp birthplace controversy makes statewide headlines," *Review-Atlas*, March 29, 1988, p. 1.

[17]William Urban, "Wyatt Earp was born here; Monmouth and the Earps 1845-1859," *Western Illinois Regional Studies*, 2(1980), pp. 154-167; on September 20, 1845, Nicholas bought Lot 2, B12 (vol. 11. p. 323) for $450 and sold it March 1, 1849 (vol. 12, p. 700) for $300. For comparative prices, note the following: Abraham Lincoln bought his ten-room mansion in Springfield in 1844 for $1500. Bogue, *Patterns from the Sod*, p. 95, says that between 1856 and 1863 a modest tenant house cost from $400 to $500.

[18]*Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal*, pp. 5-29, contains many factual errors; *Atlas*, Sept. 19, 1856, p. 2; on March 10, 1856, Nicholas bought lot 3 on Block 35 and lots 3 and 6 on Block 33 for $2050 (vol. 25, p. 110). He sold the first property December 31, 1858 (vol. 30, p. 636) for $1600, the other two lots on February 9, 1859 for $600 (vol. 31, p. 300). This property was later divided into north and south halves. Two houses of early vintage still stand there today: Floyd Geer's home at 409 South B Street and a house owned by Merle Brown at 411. At the time the most prominent citizens in Monmouth were building in this neighborhood to be near the railroad station. Unfortunately, these impressive houses can often be seen only in the county histories; they were so poorly constructed that most had to be razed. The less impressive farm-style houses with Greek or Italianate features (such as those at 213 and 406 S. 3rd) are still numerous but often suffer from neglect, injudicious

renovation, and the use of siding. In January 1859 Nicholas bought the SE and NE corners of block 15 for $800 and sold them the following December for the same price (vol. 31, 491; 32, 620).

[19]Letter from Norman Milligan, September 1, 1980 printed in the *Review-Atlas* in October 1980; contrast to *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal*, p. 9, where Wyatt claims to have harvested 80 acres in Pella, Iowa. Mr. Milligan's experience with Wyatt Earp in his old age demonstrates two problems associated with research. On the one hand, as the associate editor of the academic journal, *Western History Quarterly*, put it: "Lake . . . found Earp monosyllabic in speech, feeble in mind and health, prone to spin tall tales while at the same time unable to recall many names, dates, or actual events from his past." Paul Hutton, "Culluloid Lawman," *American West*, 21(1984), #3, p. 62; also, Wyatt was a practical joker. Robert DeArment, *Bat Masterson. The Man and the Legend* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), pp. 141f, recounts some of the famous pranks played on dudes. DeArment shared Masterson's admiration of Earp but admitted that "One of Wyatt Earp's failings was his penchant for inflating his own part in any activity in which he engaged and especially exaggerating any remuneration he received." Ibid., p. 71.

[20]Carol Clark, "Professor shoots holes in Wyatt Earp legend," *Register Mail*, April 6, 1985, quoting Rodney Davis of Knox College, "Wyatt Earp, at best, can be thought of a constant seeker of chance through exploitation of others. A kind of parasite, in other words. Our society quite obviously still breeds marginal men like Wyatt Earp . . . I personally hope that we in the future will not be so disposed to make heroes of them." Carol Clark, "Where was Earp born?," pp. 1, 2.

[21]A March 1988 nationally distributed ad ran, "Meet the Wyatt Earp Hollywood never showed you. Horsethief. Gambler. Embezzler. Outlaw. Hero. His real story is only in THE OLD WEST from Time-Life Books" and went on to say: "Every time you've seen Wyatt Earp, he's been portrayed as a good guy. But consider this: the man was tried and convicted for horse thievery. The only way he stayed out of jail was by skipping town." Opposite sides of this story can be seen in Frank Waters, *The Earp Brothers of Tombstone; the story of Mrs. Virgil Earp* (New York: Potter, 1960) and Glenn Boyer, *I married Wyatt Earp; the recollections of Josephine Sarah Marcus Earp* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976).

[22]Controversy about the Earp brothers raged during their lifetime, beginning in the 1870's. Nyle Miller and Joseph Snell, *Great Gun Fighters of the Kansas Cowtowns, 1867-1886* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), pp. 78-95 et passim, to be used with caution, mentions several prostitutes who use the Earp name. Gambling, pimping, claim jumping were such common accusations that the Earps repeatedly solicted individuals to testify to their good character and the debate among historians rages without much prospect of reaching a unanimous agreement soon. James paid fines for keeping a prostitute. (According to the Irving data: "His wife's former husband died before he married her.") Virgil's secret first marriage in 1860 was made public only after the birth of a daughter. Wyatt's first marriage ended under vague circumstances (he said she died in an epidemic, but he told people the wrong year and town), he abandoned his common-law second wife in Tucson and, although she died in 1888, he did not marry Josephine Marcus until 1898. Glenn Boyer, *Suppressed Murder of Wyatt Earp* (San Antonio: Naylor, 1967).

[23]Ralph Eckhardt, "Editorial," *Review-Atlas*, March 11, 1988, p. 4.

[24]In Pella, Iowa, one of the Wyatt Earp boyhood homes has been restored as part of the Pella Historical Village, a collection of twenty-four buildings in a courtyard at the museum. It represents a typical house of the 1850's; in September of 1988 the Birthplace Association received an offer to buy the house at 406 S. 3rd, "with plans to dismantle it and move it to Tombstone, Az., to place it in their Historic District." *Review-Atlas*, October 1, 1988. p. 3.

ISAAC NEWTON MORRIS: A NINETEENTH-CENTURY QUINCY POLITICAN

Marilyn Irvin Holt

In his lifetime, Isaac Newton Morris of Quincy engaged in many aspects of public and political life in Illinois, moving onto the national scene in the turbulent years just prior to the Civil War. Although Morris may seem little deserving of attention, he is representative of the many men who came to Illinois during the state's formative years, hoping to shape the region to their own designs. His story reveals much about the fabric of political life in the mid-nineteenth century.

Born in Ohio in 1812, Morris settled in Warsaw, Illinois, in 1836. The move to Illinois was aided by Morris' sister, Viola, and her husband, Calvin A. Warren, who had earlier settled in that new town on the Mississippi River. Warren, a native of New York, had been a junior law partner of Morris' father, Thomas, in Ohio. When the couple settled in Illinois, Warren set up a practice of law, and either as a favor to his former law partner or out of family loyalty, he agreed to share a partnership with Isaac Newton Morris.[1] This provided the young Morris, who had studied at Miami of Ohio, an opportunity to strike out on his own, with the cushion of family support.

Morris' first two years in Illinois are obscure. A year after his arrival he married Mary Ann Robbins, the daughter of early Adams County settlers, and in 1838 their first child was born. By 1838, the Warren-Morris partnership had moved to Quincy, but inexplicably the partnership dissolved soon after. Warren took on other partners and Morris kept to his own practice of law while working as a newspaper editor in Quincy.[2] From later events, it would appear that the two became less brothers-in-law and more political rivals.

Politics was a life with which Morris was familiar. His father, Thomas Morris, served in the Ohio legislature for twenty-five years and in the U.S. Congress. Morris surely was influenced by his father's career, but evidently not by his father's political leanings; the elder Morris, a staunch abolitionist, was the Liberty party's vice-presidential candidate in 1844.[3]

In Illinois, Isaac Newton Morris attempted to establish his own political

Isaac Newton Morris. Courtesy of the Illinois State Historical Library.

base. He took his first step in 1838 when he became an editor for Quincy's Democratic newspaper, the *Argus*. Like most editors of the day, Morris used the paper as a forum, expounding upon his views and those of the Democratic party. At the local level, Morris organized the Democrats in Columbus Precinct of Adams County. Soon he touted the support his efforts had gained and through the newspaper emphasized his place in local politics: "We believe as 'Squire' Morris says, that the Whigs set in motion the 'Federal Abolition Ball,' aided by that atrocious 'monster,' the United State's bank."[4]

Anti-bank and anti-abolition, Morris embodied the Democratic party's standards of the day, and stood in direct opposition to his father's philosophies. The shadow of Thomas Morris loomed large and served as a real threat to his son's political respectability in Illinois. During this time, Illinois had its contingent of Liberty party supporters, abolitionists and stops on the Underground Railroad, but it also had one of the most stringent set of "black laws" in the Old Northwest Territory and allowed legal indenture to take the place of slavery, keeping blacks in abject servitude. Certainly, the opposition, particularly Quincy's Whig newspaper, used the father's politics to discredit the son. Readers were reminded that Morris was a "son of the great Abolition Dad" and warned Morris that he might come to wish that he "was back in Ohio and helpin [*sic*] your dad rite [*sic*] Abolition Speeches."[5]

Through his own editorials, and in terms that couched abolitionism akin to a dread disease, Morris attempted to disassociate himself from his father: "Although there is *Abolitionism* in the family, we believe that the mantle of Democracy, like that of Charity, 'covers a multitude of sins.' " Morris went on to promise that he had "washed himself clean of the principles which attach to another member [of the family]."[6]

Whether Morris truly disdained abolitionism or realized the political realities for his own career cannot be determined. Whatever his inner thoughts, his actions indicate that he desired and was impatient for political office. Perhaps it was this motivation that spurred him to become involved in the 1839 controversy over who would become Illinois' secretary of state.

When Governor Carlin appointed John A. McClernand to replace Alexander P. Field as secretary of state, he set in motion a political drama that eventually led to a reexamination of the state's constitution. Carlin made an executive appointment, without a constitutional provision granting that right, when he named McClernand secretary of state. Field argued that the position was his for life and, backed by the Whig-controlled senate, refused to vacate the office. Carlin and McClernand took the case to court, but Field held fast.[7]

Why and how Morris came to be involved is a puzzle. He did not have any measurable influence in the state's Democratic party, nor did he have any great name recognition. Indeed, when he first appeared on the scene in Springfield, the *Sangamo Journal* incorrectly identified him as J. N.

Morris.[8] If there was any recognition, it was in connection with his father, and that would have been of little help.

The Springfield press first noticed Morris in July 1839 when he was cited as the "confidential friend of Gov. Carlin" and the "*prominent* cause of the proceedings" through which McClernand was attempting to obtain the secretary of state papers with a court writ. This suggests that Morris was serving as legal counsel, but there were also "rumors . . . from Jacksonville, Quincy, and other places" that Morris had "a commission of Secretary of State, which he brought here in his pocket . . . . So it appears that we have three Secretaries of State!" These rumors went on to speculate that Morris was given the commission because Carlin was dissatisfied with McClernand's "tardy courage" in taking possession of the office's archives. On July 27, the *Quincy Whig* picked up on the story and wrote that Morris had been called to the capital because Carlin did not think that McClernand was "quite savage enough" and that Morris was just the "fellow to go-ahead."[9]

One writer has suggested that Whig newspapers simply circulated these stories to create distrust between Carlin and McClernand.[10] It also might be noted that while Morris did not invent the story, he did nothing to dispel it. Certainly the rumors added to the confusion, but the question of Morris' role remains. He may have been used as a pawn, or he may have been promised the position by Carlin. Certainly, he was little more than a spectator after compromises gave, neither Field nor McClernand, but Stephen Douglas the position.

The *Quincy Whig* took great delight in what it termed Morris' "faux pas," but it would be well to note that soon after this bit of political drama, Carlin named Morris to the commissioners board of the Illinois-Michigan Canal — perhaps in compensation. Additionally, in his congressional biography, Morris insisted that he had been appointed secretary of state but "declined."[11]

Upon his return to Quincy, Morris continued to denounce the Whigs with inflammatory editorials, and in the style of the day, the *Quincy Whig* retaliated. Branded a "deliberate liar" and an "infamous scoundrel," Morris was described as that "*political loafer,* who has been lurking about this country."[12]

While Morris traded insults, he also found the *Argus* of use in proclaiming the need for internal improvements in the state. The arguments were not new or original, but added to the chorus of many others who, no matter what their politics, pushed for a "grand system" to connect the state's interior to river routes and commercial centers. Many believed that a canal was the most expedient solution to the dilemma. As one proponent enthused: "What would be the value of even the fertile Prairies of Illinois, remote from her large rivers without a canal?" Some argued that similar projects had been developed in other states such as Ohio where, ironically, Morris' father had fought canal construction.[13]

The future of the canal was doubtful, however. Citizens protested the

"ruinous system of Internal Improvements," a worker strike turned riot in 1838, and the Panic of 1837 added financial instability to an already tenuous project. Morris later noted that when he joined the canal board the "treasury was out of money," and the legislature had failed to further fund construction. Contractors, who could, abandoned the project: those that could not had to accept script or bonds in payment for services rendered. Generally, the lack of state funding was interpreted as "abandonment," and uncertainties were not lessened when commissioners engaged in political maneuverings over proposed routes, as did Morris and W. F. Thornton.[14]

If there was a bright spot to his board tenure, it was the naming of a town for Commissioner Morris. With the organization of Grundy County, the state legislature stipulated that the county seat be located along the Illinois-Michigan Canal and that the site be chosen by the canal commissioners and a group of private citizens. The choice, however, was not an easy one when private speculation, some of it by the very persons who were to select a site, deadlocked any decision. It was Morris who finally broke the stalemate, and in recognition of his contribution, it was decided to name the new county seat for him. First, it was to be Morristown — until it was discovered that a town by that name already existed. Then Morrisville was suggested, but Morris objected, saying that the name suggested a "mere village." Finally, it was agreed that the named would be simply, "Morris."[15]

By 1849, Isaac Newton Morris was looking to other internal improvements, specifically rail development. He and others, including brother-in-law Warren, purchased stock in the ailing Northern Cross Railroad. As an incorporator and commissioner of the railroad, and later president of the board of directors, Morris reluctantly agreed to the sale of some routes to save the system. Willing to compromise to salvage the project, Morris believed that the dream of connecting interior Illinois "with the Atlantic Ocean on the East, and perhaps, at no distant day, the Pacific Ocean on the West," was coming true.[16]

Morris' involvement in the development of the state's transport systems brought his name before the public and provided name recognition outside Adams County. Through his commission work and his loyalty to the Democratic party, he reached a milestone in 1846 when he was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives where he served unremarkably but with enough fanfare to achieve higher office. In 1956 he was able to overcome political opposition and the "mantle" of abolitionism and was elected to the U.S. House. Morris was noticed in that office, and by 1858 his reputation as a Douglas Democrat won him support from such men as Horace Greeley.[17]

Morris shared Stephen Douglas' dissatisfaction with the Buchanan Administration's stingy handout of patronage to Illinois after the 1858 election. Equally unsettling was Buchanan's attitude towards slavery in the territories and his appeasement of southern radicals. Morris during

this time made four speeches before the House, each condemning the President's policies. These were not mere political denunciations by a "western" Democrat, but personal statements based on Morris' emotional assessment of the man in office. During his newspaper career, Morris had favored the attack on personalities, and that tendency was evident in his public pronouncements. Indeed, six years after Buchanan had left office, Morris again took personal exception when the former President announced his intention of writing his memoirs. As caustic as ever, Morris warned: "I do not think, if I were in your place, I would say anything about who gave power, vitality, and form to the southern rebellion."[18]

As the Democratic incumbent, Morris expected to be returned to Congress in 1860. Rivalry with his brother-in-law Warren led to a stalemate of the nominating convention, however, and the nod went instead to William A. Richardson of Quincy.[19] Morris faced a turbulent last term in office. On the question of slavery, Morris, like his fellow Illinois Democrats in Congress, opposed the Lecompton Bill which would have allowed Kansas' admission as a slave state. Addressing the House, he reiterated Stephen Douglas' agrument that slavery was not the true issue: "I am satisfied that not one Democrat . . . would hesitate a single moment to vote for the admission of Kansas as a slave state, if it was the will of the majority of her people." Believing that this was not the case, Morris warned that "a standing army in Kansas will not be sufficient to enforce it."[20]

While debate continued over Popular Sovereignty and Kansas' admission to the Union, the Thirty-sixth Congress was embroiled over the House deadlock in selection of a Speaker. Morris was loyal to party but rather uncontrollable. Victor Hicken, writing of the speakership fight, observed that Morris was a "laggard" when he proved unwilling to accept McClernand and Senator Douglas' compromise choice. More to the point may be Morris' political personality. He could not be as conciliatory as McClernand, nor could he be anything but provocative in his rhetoric. At one point in the deadlock, Douglas was warned that Morris was "in a bad temper" and threatening to address the House. It was argued that a "hostile speech" would only hurt the balance the Illinois delegation had been striving for . Douglas, however, could or would not stop Morris, and the speech was delivered with the expected negative results.[21]

Rather surprisingly, Morris elevated himself above partisan politics with the election of Lincoln to the presidency. Although during the campaign he had attempted to smear Lincoln as a supporter of the anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic Know-Nothings, Morris accepted the election and tried to assure fellow congressmen that Lincoln's election did not mean a dissolution of the Union. On December 17, 1860, Morris presented a House Resolution that declared that the Union would be preserved and that Lincoln's election could in no way justify a sessionist movement. To this Lincoln responded, thanking Morris for the resolution which was "ex-

pressive of views upon which we never were, and, I trust, never will be at variance."[22]

With the firing upon Fort Sumter, many Democrats foundered, uncertain as to what to support — was support for the Union also support for the Republican party? In the Illinois congressional delegation, Morris and McClernand were quick to give "undivided support to the government," and Morris was labeled a "prominent war Democrat."[23] This reputation clung to Morris even after he left Congress.

Morris may have been remembered for his Union support because he chose to remain close to the seat of power during the war years. A law office was established in Washington, D.C., and Morris took on a variety of cases, including litigation against the U.S. government. One of Morris' more lengthy cases, and one that produced no positive results for his client, involved the State of Illinois and the return of the "two-percent fund" from the federal government.

While the war took precedence in the hearts and minds of the nation, there was other interrupted, and unfinished, business at hand. Morris, as Illinois Governor Richard Yates' "agent and attorney for Illinois," had begun the crusade for the two-percent fund while still in Congress. Later, as Illinois' legal representative, he was bound to carry on proceedings despite the war.

The controversy over the two-percent fund dated to 1818 when Illinois' constitution, like that of other states, provided that the federal government would turn back to the state five percent of all monies earned in the sale of government land. With few exceptions, most states did not realize the full five percent. Illinois had received three percent, but Morris was determined to gain the rest for he envisioned the additional money being spent on other internal improvement projects in the state. When the government argued that the remaining two percent had been returned in the form of the Cumberland Road, Morris correctly countered that the federally funded road had been abandoned at the Indiana-Illinois line, with Illinois, not the U. S. government, making any later improvements.[24]

To press the case, Morris demanded that Congressman Fouke of Illinois give his support, and Morris then demanded, and was finally allowed, interviews with Lincoln. Evidently, congressional pressure had little influence, and Lincoln had other matters at hand, for in August 1863, an impatient and irritable Morris wrote Lincoln: "Must I infer . . . that I am refered [*sic*] to the Interior Department or must I wait upon your Excellency . . . . When may I expect a definite answer?" Lincoln agreed that the "law is with the state," but he privately noted that Illinois, and perhaps its representative, was "ungracious to be pressing the claim at this time of national trouble." When later attempts to gain congressional and Department of Interior support failed, the quest for the two-percent fund was dropped. The question was briefly revived in the 1870s by Morris' son, Thomas, who achieved no better results.[25]

Another litigation against the U. S. government is of interest for the

question addressed, for the image it presents of Morris as a well-studied lawyer, and for the broader view it provides of a society on the verge of reevaluating white and Native American relationships. Morris, in 1870, served as legal counsel for the Cherokee Nation, arguing against a congressional bill that would consolidate all Indian groups under one territorial government without regard for separate tribal cultures. The bill's language grouped all Indian tribes and nations into one homogenous unit, ignoring the highly individual and sophisticated religious, social, and governmental structures found within specific linguistic and cultural units. Morris recognized this simplification and attempted to argue for his client on the basis of the Cherokee Nation's complex society. Specifically detailing the cultural and historical achievements of the Cherokees, Morris argued that their treatment at the hands of the government should be as a separate nation.

Morris, however, was pragmatic and realized that expansionist policies had decided the issue. Denouncing a national attitude and pleading for humanitarian treatment, Morris in his final arguments stated that "If they [Cherokees] are to be effectually and forever crushed, tell them so . . . . If the politician is to be turned loose among them . . . [if] their rich lands are to be thrown open for the Man of Greed . . . all is over for them . . . . This may be 'manifest destiny' in the estimation of some, but to others it will appear rapaciousness."[26]

How and if Morris reconciled his arguments for protection of the Indian and his own desire for national railway development is not known. It is likely that he saw no conflict for he gladly accepted an appointment as a Union Pacific commissioner from President U. S. Grant, whom he had known "from his boyhood." This appointment was Morris' last governmental position, and his last contribution to the development of internal improvements.

The Morris and Grant families had known each other in Ohio, and over the years Isaac Newton Morris had kept a correspondence with both Ulysses S. Grant and his parents. Morris had urged the former to seek the presidency and had invited the latter to visit his family in Quincy.[27]

When Grant was nominated for President, Morris, the hard-shell Democrat, worked for the general's election, proclaiming that while Grant was a "mystery to politicians," he was "an open book" to the people and a man who could return "the presidential office to its former dignity and authority." Morris solicited support outside Illinois, contacting influential men such as New York attorney J. K. Herbert who had the ear of financial circles. While Herbert reluctantly agreed to aid Grant, he stated that the general should not "allow himself to be run" for "he can never *get* out of the Presidency as proudly as he can *remain* out." [28]

When Grant visited in Quincy in 1868, there were rumors that an appointment was in the making for Morris. Although Grant would say only that he had come to visit a "life-long friend," the speculations proved true with Morris named a Union Pacific commissioner.

For his first inspection tour, Morris left for Omaha, Nebraska, in May 1869. Several tours followed and with each Morris observed the progress of work, made reports, and became more disconcerted with what he witnessed. Appalled by hasty construction and faulty workmanship, Morris, in his final report to the U. S. Department of the Interior, disgustedly wrote, "this may be American enterprise, or it may be American recklessness."[29] Certainly, Morris' early-expressed dream of a rail system spanning the continent to the Pacific did not completely conform to the reality of its construction.

The Grant appointment was Morris' last public office. On one of his infrequent trips to Illinois, Isaac Newton Morris died on October 29, 1879. Buried in Quincy's Woodland Cemetery, Morris was by then a dim memory to his adopted town and state. Few recalled that it was Morris who initiated Adams County's agricultural society or that the private Morris was a man who wrote memorial poetry upon the death of a daughter and quietly said of a lost son, "a most interesting and lovely child."[30]

The public works of a lifetime drifted into obscurity. He was too long away from Illinois, and he was overshadowed by political contemporaries whose philosophies and contributions stood as monuments of the period. That Morris did not weather the test of time should not, however, diminish what were major issues to which he forcefully responded. Now a nearly forgotten nineteenth-century politician, Morris most often took the role of staunch party-line follower, but he was also an independent thinker who upon occasion repudiated public opinion and ignored party leadership. His life was extraordinary and unique, yet he was representative of many who emigrated to a developing state determined for political involvement and the opportunity to shape that state's future to suit his dreams.

NOTES

[1]David F. Wilcox, ed., *Quincy and Adams County* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1919), I, 160; *The History of Adams County, Illinois* (Chicago: Murray, Williamson & Phelps, 1879), p. 413.

[2]William H. Collins and Cicero F. Perry, *Past and Present of the City of Quincy and Adams County, Illinois* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1905), p. 36; Thomas B. Nelson and Mildred C. Nelson, *The Census of Adams County, Illinois, 1850* (The authors, n.d.), p. 126a; *U.S. Census Records, 1850*, 65B, 804, Illinois State Archives [hereafter cited as ISA]; Probate Record of I. N. Morris, Box 364, Office of the Recorder, Adams County, Adams County Courthouse, Quincy; Morris family papers, Morris Collection, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency [hereafter cited as IHPA]. Five children were born to Isaac Newton and Mary Ann Morris; only two, Edgar and Thomas, survived to adulthood.

[3]B. F. Morris, *The Life of Thomas Morris* (Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstach, Keys & Overend, 1856), pp. xi, 61, 63, 341; *Quincy Whig*, October 30, 1844. Morris' brother,

Jonathan, also served in Congress, as a Democrat from Ohio. See *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971* (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 1441.

[4]*Quincy Argus*, January 19, 1839, p. 2.

[5]*Quincy Whig*, June 1, 1839, p. 1.

[6]*Quincy Argus*, January 19, 1839, p. 2.

[7]Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 84-87; Arnold Shankman, "Partisan Conflcts, 1839-1841, and the Illinois Constitution," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 63 (Winter 1970), 337-45.

[8]*Sangamo Journal*, July 12, 1839, p. 2, July 19, 1839, p. 2.

[9]Ibid.; *Quincy Whig*, July 27, 1839, p. 2.

[10]Shankman, "Partisan Conflicts," pp. 344-45; Shankman based this conclusion on the two *Sangamo Journal* issues cited above, and since the newspaper incorrectly identified Morris, so did Shankman.

[11]*Sangamo Journal*, August 2, 1839, p. 2, August 16, 1839, and September 13, 1839; *Quincy Whig*, July 27, 1839, p. 2; *Directory of American Congress, 1774-1971*, p. 1441. Carlin and Morris may have become acquainted when Carlin was the register of the land office at Quincy prior to his election as governor in 1838. For Carlin see Newton Bateman and Paul Selby, eds. *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois* (Chicago: Munsell Publishing Co., 1901), p. 79.

[12]*Quincy Whig*, July 27, 1839, p. 2.

[13]*Illinois Bounty Land Register*, October 16, 1835, p. 1; Morris, *Thomas Morris*, p. 40.

[14]*Quincy Whig*, August 21, 1839, p. 2; House Journal, 1840-1841, p. 433, and Executive Record, 1837-1843, III, 242, ISA; Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), II, 182-86; Theodore C. Peace, *The Frontier State, 1818-1848*, vol. 2 of *The Centennial History of Illinois*, ed., Clarence C. Alvord, (Springfield Centennial Commission, 1918), pp. 232-33; J. W. Putnam, *An Economic History of the Illinois and Michigan Canal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, reprinted from *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 17, pp. 284, 287. The 1838 workers' strike near LaSalle resulted in a call for Illinois Militia, and at least twelve workers were killed in riot. See *Quincy Whig*, June 30, 1838, p. 2.

[15]*History of Grundy County, Illinois* (Chicago: C. L. Baskin & Co., 1882), pp. 183-248.

[16]Private Laws, 1849, p. 82, ISA; *History of Adams County* (1879), p. 479; *Quincy Herald and Argus*, March 22, 1850, p. 2.

[17]Election Returns, 1846, 67: 48, ISA; *Quincy Whig*, September 16, 1846; Executive Record, 1856-1860, 7:59, ISA; *Biographical Directory of American Congress, 1774-1927* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1928), p. 1336; Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, p. 650; "Isaac Newton Morris," reference vertical file, IHPA. In

the same year he was elected to the Illinois legislature, Morris served as an arbitrator during Mormon War. See *Quincy Whig*, September 23, 1846.

[18]Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, p. 555; *Quincy Herald*, March 17,1862, p. 3.

[19]Wilcox, *Quincy and Adams County*, p. 160; Robert D. Holt, "The Political Career of William A. Richardson," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 26 (October 1933), pp. 222-69.

[20]I. N. Morris, *Speech of Hon. I. N. Morris of Illinois Against the Admission of Kansas Under the Lecompton Constitution* (The author, 1858), IHPA. See also James P. Jones, "John A. Logan, Freshman in Congress, 1859-1861," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 56 (Spring 1963), 36-60.

[21]Victor Hicken, "John A. McClernand and the House Speakership Struggle of 1859." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 53 (Summer 1960), 173-76; Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, pp. 718-19.

[22]Basler, *Collected Works of Lincoln*, IV, 86n, 161.

[23]Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, p. 862; Arthur C. Cole, *The Era of the Civil War, 1848-1870*, vol. 3 of *The Centennial History of Illinois*, ed., Clarence C. Alvord (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1922), pp. 256, 296.

[24]I. N. Morris, *Report on the Two Per Cent Fund* (Quincy, Ill.: Quincy Herald Book and Job Office, 1863); *Message from Governor Yates, Transmitting Reports of Hon. I. N. Morris, in Relation to the Two Per Cent Fund* (Springfield, Ill.: Baker & Phillips, 1865).

[25]Basler, *Collected Works of Lincoln*, VI, 404-5; Copy of U. S. Court of Claims Petition, Morris Collection, IHPA.

[26]I. N. Morris, *Argument for the Cherokee Indians* (Washington. D.C.: Chronical Print, 1870), pp. 8-13.

[27]"Letter of J. R. Grant to I. N. Morris," and "Letter of U. S. Grant to I. N. Morris," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (January 1916), 591-93; Morris family papers, Morris Collection, IHPA. For reference to Grant's appointment to West Point with the help of Ohio congressman, Thomas Morris, see John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), I, 3-4, 363.

[28]I. N. Morris, *Speech: Grant and Why He Should be Elected President* (The author, 1867), 1; J. K. Herbert to I. N. Morris, August 29, 1867, Morris Collection, IHPA. Additionally, Morris wrote a biography of Grant and published it anonymously in the Washington, D.C., *National Intelligencer*, in March 1864. Morris wrote to Grant sending along clippings of the biography and explained his actions by saying that "I had never met with any thing in print which I thought did you justice." See John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982) X, 54.

[29]Bateman and Selby, *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois*, 386; *Directory of American Congress, 1774-1927*, p. 1336; "Morris Family," reference vertical file, IHPA; I. N. Morris Report on Union Pacific Railroad, May 1876, Morris Collection, IHPA.

[30]For reference to agricultural society see *Quincy Daily Herald*, October 18, 1853, p. 2, November 1, 1853, p. 2. For reference to Morris children see "lines written on the death of Mary Viola," Morris Collection, IHPA. The reference to the son is penciled on the same memorial to Mary Viola.

AN ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION OF THIRD GENERATION COUNTRY SCHOOLS IN BROWN COUNTY

James W. Vining

The one-room country schoolhouse standing in the middle of an independent school district symbolizes, perhaps better than any other feature of material culture, the shared community life so many older Americans remember. The symbolization goes further. The country school represents much that many Americans hold dear — freedom of assembly, individualism, and faith in the power of education to transform lives and provide a better tomorrow. Indeed, the country school did change lives and expand opportunities. Wayne E. Fuller, in his important book, *The Old Country School,* noted that "Certainly it is true that in thousands of little rural school districts across that broad land, the one-room school . . . virtually eliminated illiteracy."[1]

For decades one-room country schoolhouses, once such important features of the cultural milieu, have been rapidly disappearing from the rural landscape. That fact makes all the more important the need for scholars interested in the cultural environment to conduct research about them. Limiting such research has been the absence of an architectural classification for country schools, a problem that is addressed and, hopefully, alleviated to a significant degree by this study.

Most of the country schools that were abandoned upon consolidation of the schools of Brown County, Illinois, in 1947 were the third school of the same name to occupy the same or approximately the same site. Thus, despite the exceptions, it is useful to think of the just-before-consolidation schools as "third generation" schools. The first generation school, at most sites, was a log cabin, and the second was a frame building that was torn down late in the nineteenth century or early in the twentieth century to make way for a more adequate third generation school.

The research done in this study involved (1) a survey of the Brown County country schoolhouses still remaining in the landscape, (2) an effort

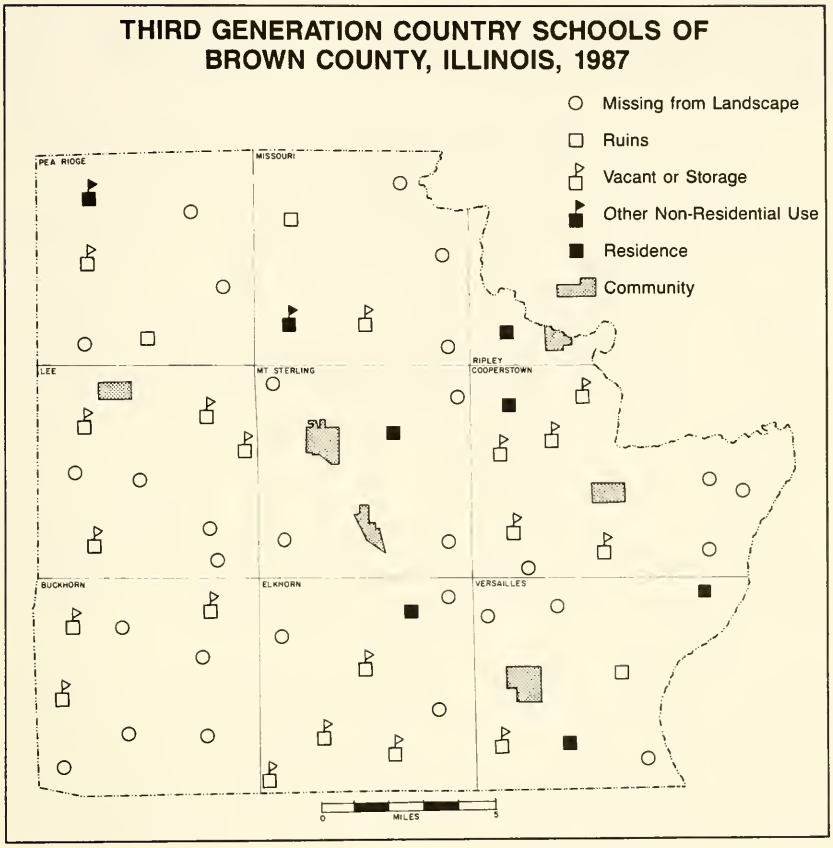


Fig. 1

to gather from the historical record information about non-extant third generation schools, (3) the identification and analysis of certain basic characteristics of the buildings, and (4) an attempt to ascertain architectural classes for the schoolhouses. An early discovery was that the passage of four decades since consolidation erased from the historical record and from the memories of area residents most of what was once known about the old schoolhouses.

Although memories are dimmed, those remaining tend to be warm. Indeed, nostalgia long has figured in Brown Countians' contemplations of the country school, even for those who know the reality behind the myth. The buildings were plain and unimpressive, but they housed an impressive array of activities, doubling (tripling and quadrupling) as theaters, dance halls, and polling places. The school was the focal point of enjoyable happenings that joined people together into a community, and the identity

of rural settlements became inextricably linked with their schools. Some of the school buildings were deary, drafty, and too cold in the winter, but those unhappy facts do not loom large in the minds of people whose homes, as often as not, also were dreary, drafty, and too cold in the winter. The fading memories, therefore, tend to be good ones.

A question the researcher had to answer early in the study was "What constitutes a country school?" For purposes of this research all schools with more than one room were excluded. Since all third generation village and town schools had two to ten rooms, they were not part of the study, but the country schools examined did include one-room schools of defunct hamlets.

Brown County had 59 third generation country schools, located in Figure 1. (That number of schools in a county which includes only nine townships dispels the notion that fathers and grandfathers in Brown County walked *miles* in their youth to get to school.) The number of one-room schools per township ranged from one (in Ripley, by far the smallest township) to 10 (in neighboring Cooperstown Township). The average number of country schools per township was 6.5. Figure 1 shows the location of the schools and their present status as cultural landscape units. It reveals nothing unusual about the geographic distribution of the schools. Table 1 identifies by name the schools which fall into the various present-status units mapped in Figure 1.

Almost half of the 59 schoolhouses were missing from the landscape when the fieldwork was conducted in 1987. Nineteen of the extant schoolhouses were either vacant or used for storage in 1987. Six buildings had been converted into residences by 1987. Two original school buildings were classified in Table 1 as having "Other Non-Residential Use;" one was serving in 1987 as a township meeting hall and the other as an educational annex (Sunday School) for an adjoining country church. The remaining three buildings had collapsed by 1987 and were "extant" only as ruins.

The orientation of country schoolhouses was long considered important because of natural lighting requirements, so orientation and lighting are examined together here. New England school architect Henry Barnard pointed out in 1848 that "Light from the north is less variable," but he did not go so far as to recommend north-facing windows because north light "imparts less of the cheerfulness and warmth than light from other directions."[2] James Johonnot, in the 1866 edition of his popular *Country School-Houses,* observed that "Much has been written about the superiority of north light . . . but it is questionable whether (it is) to be preferred for a schoolhouse."[3] The Illinois Department of Public Instruction, however, recommended in 1912 that the natural light in a modern schoolhouse "should come from the north."[4]

The matter of schoolhouse orientation might have been less significant if both sides of the building typically had the same number of windows, but this was not always the case. The characteristic Midwestern one-room schoolhouse had, according to Wayne E. Fuller, "three windows on each

Table 1

THIRD-GENERATION COUNTRY SCHOOLS OF BROWN COUNTY, ILLINOIS, BY STATUS OR USE, 1987

Missing from Landscape

1. Benville
2. Bottom Prairie
3. Buckhorn
4. Byrnes
5. Council
6. Cross Roads
7. Dale
8. Fairview
9. Fargo
10. Ferndale
11. Friendly
12. Gilbirds
13. Harper
14. Howes
15. La Grange
16. Liberty
17. Lynn
18. McDaniel
19. Mounds
20. New
21. Olive
22. Patterson
23. Pell
24. Petri
25. Reddick
26. Robinson
27. Sand Ridge
28. Sunny Hill
29. White Oak

Ruins

1. Ebenezer
2. Quinlan
3. Vandeventer

Vacant or Storage

1. Barton
2. Clark
3. DeWitt
4. Fagan
5. Ferguson
6. Grove
7. Hall
8. Hill
9. Lester
10. Little Missouri
11. Moore
12. Morrellville
13. North Bend
14. Oakland
15. Perry
16. Pleasant View
17. Shank
18. Washington
19. Williams

Other Non-Residential Use

1. Bell (town hall for township)
2. Poe (religious education use)

Residence

1. Adams
2. Hambaugh
3. Hazel Dell
4. McKee
5. Myers
6. Pleasant Hill

of its long sides . . ."[5] He went on to note that it was ideal for the schoolhouse "to sit with its windowless front wall to the west so that the light streaming through the windows from the north and south would strike the children's desks."[6] Despite the ideal, Fuller concluded that it was almost a natural law in the rural Midwest that the schoolhouse face the road.[7]

In Brown County, practically all of the third generation schools faced the road, so they adhere to Fuller's orientation generalization. They do not, however, fit his generalization that the typical Midwestern schoolhouse had three windows on each side. The same is true of non-extant schools for which architectural information is available. The typical third generation Brown County schoolhouse had three windows on one side but five to eight on the other.

Table 2

ORIENTATION OF THIRD GENERATION COUNTRY SCHOOLS, BROWN COUNTY, ILLINOIS

North Facing	South Facing	East Facing	West Facing	Unknown
McKee	Barton	Adams	Bell	Benville
Olive	Byrnes	Bottom Prairie	Fagan	New
	Cross Roads	Buckhorn	Gilbirds	Quinlan
	Dale	Clark	Liberty	
	DeWitt	Council	Lynn	
	Ebenezer	Fairview	Mounds	
	Ferguson	Fargo	Myers	
	Ferndale	Grove	Pell	
	Friendly	Hambaugh	Petri	
	Hall	Hazel Dell	Reddick	
	Harper	Howes	Sunny Hill	
	Hill	LaGrange		
	McDaniel	Lester		
	Moore	Little Missouri		
	Morrellville	North Bend		
	Oakland	Pleasant Hill		
	Patterson	Pleasant View		
	Perry	Robinson		
	Poe	Sand Ridge		
	Shank	Washington		
	Vandeventer	White Oak		
	Williams			

Table 3

DIRECTION OF MOST WINDOWS ON THIRD GENERATION COUNTRY SCHOOLS, BROWN COUNTY, ILLINOIS

North Facing	South Facing	East Facing	West Facing	Unknown
Fagan	Adams	Bell	Barton	Benville
Gilbirds	Bottom Prairie	Ferndale	DeWitt	Buckhorn
Little Missouri	Clark	McKee	Ebenezer	Byrnes
Myers	Council		Ferguson	Cross Roads
Pleasant Hill	Fargo		Hall	Dale
Shank	Grove		Hambaugh	Fairview
	Hazel Dell		Hill	Friendly
	Lester		Moore	Harper
	North Bend		Morrellville	Howes
	Patterson		Oakland	LaGrange
	Pleasant View		Perry	Liberty
	Robinson		Poe	Lynn
	Washington		Vandeventer	McDaniel
			Williams	Mounds
				New
				Olive
				Pell
				Petri
				Quinlan
				Reddick
				Sand Ridge
				Sunny Hill
				White Oak

Tables 2 and 3 identify the orientation of the Brown County school buildings and the direction faced by their most-windowed side. The orientation of 56 of the third generation buildings could be ascertained in the landscape or from photographs. Almost an equal number of schools faced south (22) and east (21), respectively. Eleven faced west and two faced north, the two directions from which wintry cP (polar continental) air in midlatitude cyclones is most likely to approach. These facts suggest that in the construction of at least a fifth of Brown County's pre-consolidation country schools, winter heating was a consideration that could not offset the "neatness factor" of facing them toward the road.

The winter heating factor in schoolhouse orientation shrinks further in significance when the placement of windows is considered. This is clear in Table 3, even though much less is known about window placement than building orientation. (Twenty-three of the 59 schools are "unknowns" in Table 3.) When the buildings were constructed, there was little understanding of the relationship between windows and winter heat loss — not that a better understanding necessarily would have overcome the penchant to face buildings toward the road. From a heating standpoint, the best orientation would have a south-facing front door and the major bank of windows facing east. Table 3 reveals, however, that only three of the 36 Brown County country school buildings of known window orientation had east-facing windows. No nineteenth century school architecture book recommended west-facing windows, but Table 3 shows more schools in the west-facing-windows category than in any other. Also without regard to winter heating considerations, the Illinois Department of Public Instruction had recommended north-facing schoolhouse windows in 1912. At least six Brown County pre-consolidation schools had north-facing windows. Thirteen schools had south-facing windows, a seemingly good choice from both heating and lighting standpoints.

Andrew Gulliford, in his *America's Country Schools*, an almost definitive work, noted that "By the third generation of school building, school districts almost always followed architectural plan books."[8] Architect-designed plans for schoolhouses have been available since 1832, when William A. Alcott's *Essay on the Construction of School-Houses* was published.[9] Other nineteenth century schoolhouse pattern books were written by Henry Barnard (1848), Charles P. Dwyer (1856), James Johonnot (1866), and Samuel Eveleth (1870).[10] Despite Gulliford's statement quoted above, not one of the Brown County schoolhouses of known design appears to have been closely patterned after a plan in any of those nineteenth century works.

Brown County's third generation schools, on the other hand, appear to be vernacular — not folk vernacular (based entirely on local materials), but mass vernacular (identifiable by commercially-available building materials). According to Fred E. H. Schroeder, the important factor in the vernacular buildings is that "the vernacularity is in the design, which is traditional: the builder (not an architect) builds not according to blue-

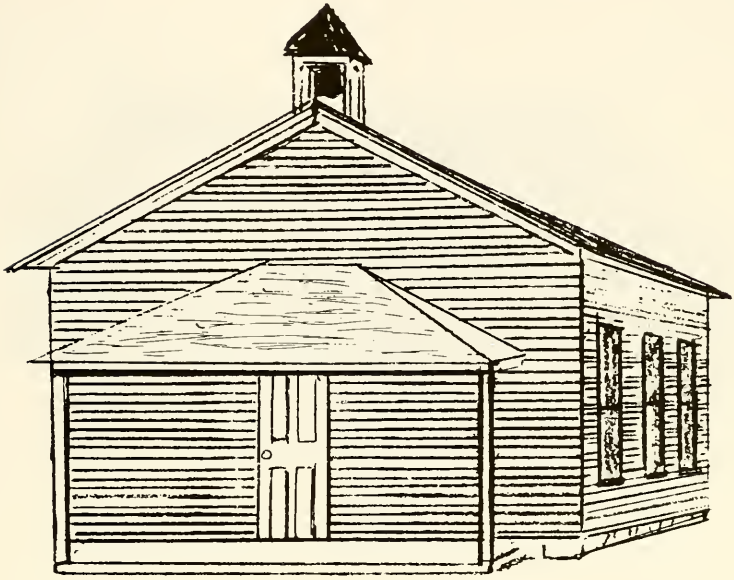


Fig. 2. Class I (End Flush Door).

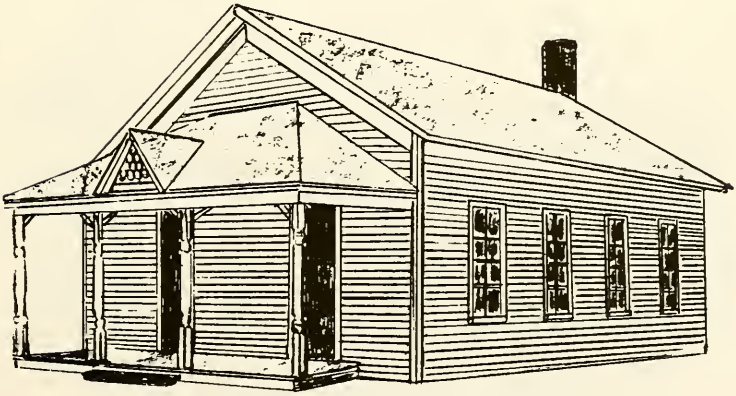


Fig. 3. Class II (End Double Flush Doors).

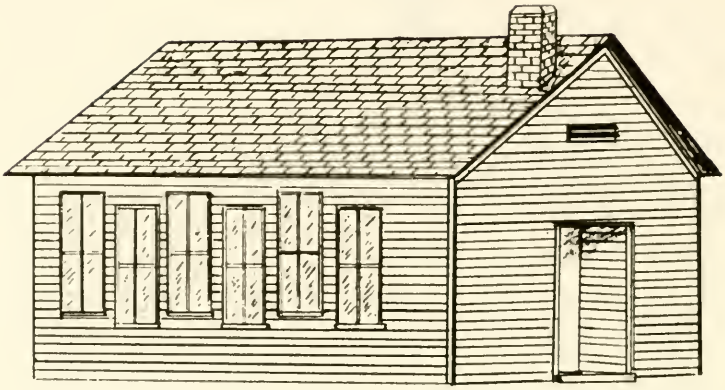


Fig. 4. Class III (End Single Recessed Door).

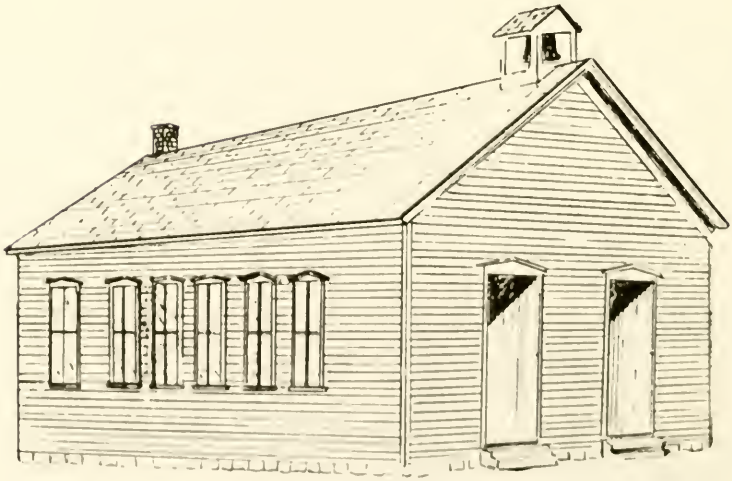


Fig. 5. Class IV (End Double Recessed Doors).

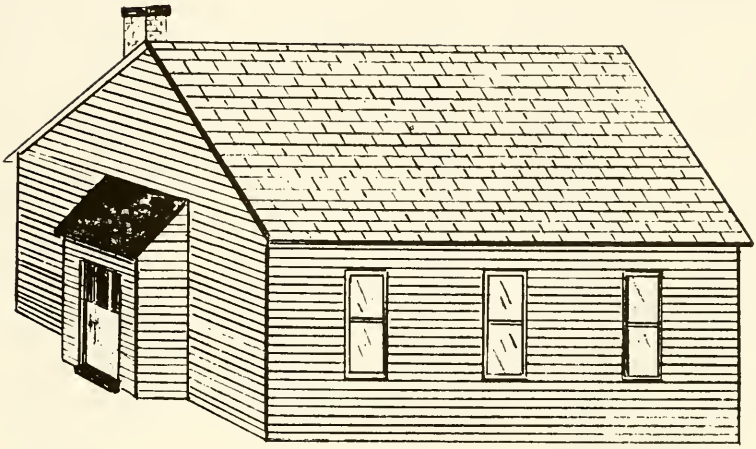


Fig. 6. Class V (Enclosed End Entrance).

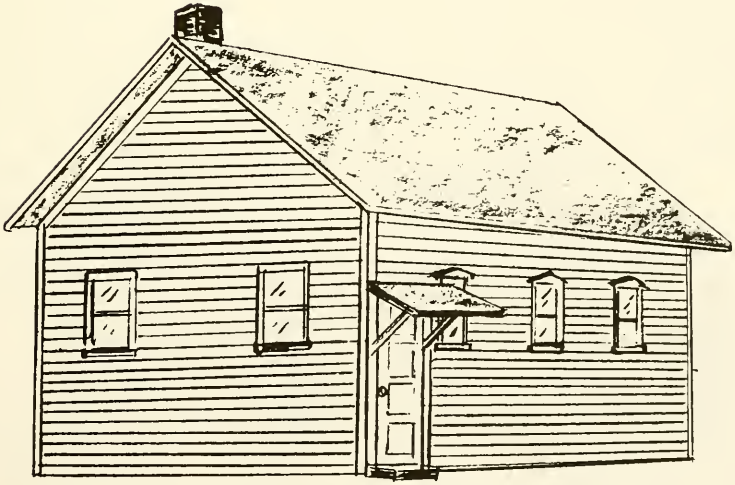


Fig. 7. Class VI (Side Door).

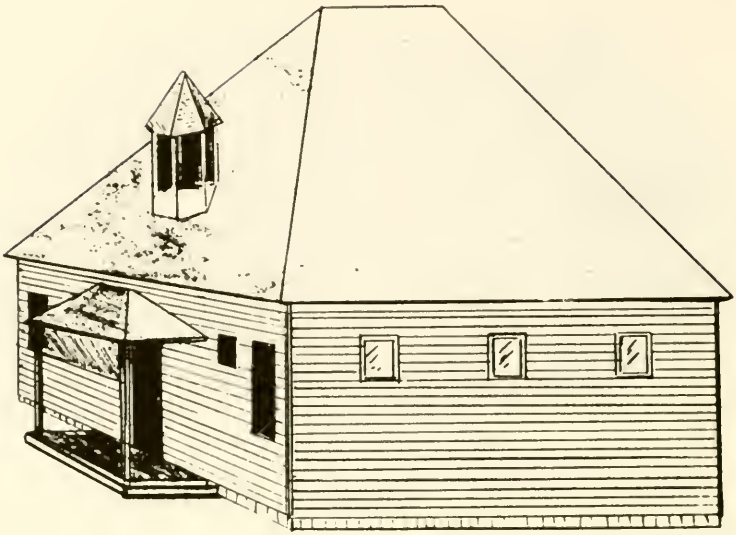


Fig. 8. Class VII (Hipped Roof).

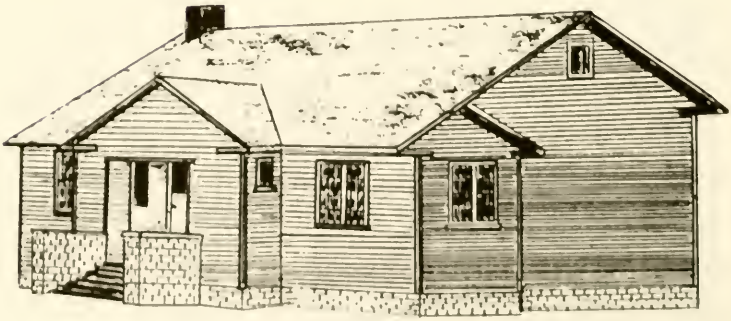


Fig. 9. Class VIII (New Look).

prints, but according to a cultural template in his mind about what a schoolhouse 'looks like.' "[11] Design elements in vernacular school buildings were transmitted westward in the process of cultural diffusion.

Of the 59 third generation country schools in Brown Country, 29 were visible in the landscape in 1987, and photographs were available for 13 others. The basic architectural elements of 42 schoolhouses, therefore, could be considered in the establishment of architectural classes. These 42 school buildings, in the classification developed for this study, fall into eight types. Seven of them are vernacular types based on door and roof designs. The eighth is a modern non-vernacular design.

The eight architectural types are designated with Roman numerals and names as follows: (I) End Flush Door, (II) End Flush Double Doors, (III) End Single Recessed Door, (IV) End Double Recessed Doors, (V) Enclosed End Entrance, (VI) Side Door, (VII) Hipped Roof, and (VIII) New Look. Table 4 identifies the extant and non-extant schoolhouses in each category, and Table 5 provides a numerical summary. Figures 2 through 9 are drawings of typical structures in the eight classes.

The most common schoolhouse design in Brown County is the one represented by Class I (End Flush Door), which includes 17 of the 42 buildings of known design. The entrance was a center door, flush with the wall, on the front (gable end) of the building. (See Figure 2.) New England and other eastern antecedents of this basic design often had no porch, but all 17 of the Brown County schools in this class had a covered front porch to provide protection from inclement weather.

Class II schoolhouses looked much like those of Class I except that they had two front doors, both flush with the wall. Figure 3 shows a schoolhouse of this design. Five of the Brown County schools of known design fall into this class. New England and other eastern antecedents abound; as churches often had two front doors, one for males, the other for females, many schoolhouses likewise had two entrances, one of boys and one for girls. This design was considered desirable for its encouragement of decorum. In 1848 Barnard had cited as a common error in schoolhouse construction the failure to provide separate entrances for boys and girls, and his book had been very influential.[12]

The second most common schoolhouse design in Brown County is the one represented by Class III (End Single Recessed Door). Nine of the 42 buildings of known design had a single recessed door. Figure 4 shows a schoolhouse typical of this design. A roofed porch evidently was not considered necessary because of the recessing of the door, and not one of the Brown County schoolhouses with recessed doors was porched. This was typical of schoolhouse construction employing recessed doorways in the eastern states.

Class IV schoolhouses looked much like those of Class III except that they had two recessed doors, not one. (See Figure 5.) Only three of the 42 buildings of known design had two recessed doors, and none of them had porches. Antecedents of this twin-door design are common in New

England, and the reason for the two doors was the same as in the Class II (End Flush Double Doors) design — encouraging decorum by separating the sexes.

School buildings with enclosed entrances were uncommon in Brown County, only two schools falling into Class V (Enclosed End Entrance). One is still in the landscape, but Figure 6 was based upon photographs of the other, which vanished from the cultural environment many years ago. The concept of the enclosed schoolhouse entrance is an old one, and many examples still exist in New England and other eastern states.

Class VI (Side Door) is an architectural type represented in Brown County by only one example, upon which Figure 7 is based. Schoolhouses with only side doors were common in New England in the eighteenth century, and many nineteenth century examples can be seen in the eastern states today. Few of them, however, are as plain and unimposing as Brown County's Shank School, now used as a hay barn.

The six classes described above all had gable roofs and were distinguished on the basis of door type (flush or recessed), number (one or two), and placement (end or side). Class VII has a different roof style — a hipped roof. Figure 8 is a drawing based on the most imposing of the two known hipped-roof schoolhouses built in Brown County. Eastern antecedents of hipped-roof school buildings are not uncommon, but throughout the country the hipped roof was much less likely than the gable roof to be used in the construction of country schools.

Class VIII country schoolhouses in Brown County are designated "New Look" schools because they do not "look like" what a country school is "supposed" to look like. That is, they do not appear to be vernacular buildings, structures built without blueprints and in accordance with the builder's notions about how a country school is supposed to look. Rather, they have the look of buildings constructed according to blueprints designed by architects intent on departing from traditional designs. They look more like houses than schoolhouses, not that schoolhouses which looked like houses represented a new concept. Eveleth (1870) had included in his pattern book a number of plans for schoolhouses that looked more like houses. Of the 42 schools of known design in Brown County, three are "New Look" schools. Not one of them was based entirely on plans shown in any available pattern book, but one bears a striking resemblance to the "modern school" plan being recommended by the Illinois Department of Public Instruction in 1912. Figure 9 is based on that school and bears architectural elements present in the other two.

The architectural classification scheme developed in this study for third generation country schools satisfactorily accommodates all of the third generation schools of known design in Brown County. It is possible, although not likely, that an additional class or two may have been required if information had been available about the design of 17 non-extant Brown County schoolhouses. This original classification was developed because no comparable classification has been published, so far as could be

determined. It is not suggested that this classification is a definitive one that will work elsewhere as well as it works in Brown County, Illinois. Hopefully, researchers elsewhere will consider its possible merits, try it, and refine it as necessary.

Country schools were important before consolidation, not just as educational institutions but as social institutions. But that was then — and this is now. Despite some lingering nostalgia, there is little public interest in the old schoolhouses or knowledge about them. Few people care that every year there are fewer of the old buildings left than the year before. The dilapidated structures have not even attracted much interest from research scholars in disciplines that focus on the cultural landscape. For example, the meeting programs and publications of the Pioneer America Society are virtually devoid of anything pertaining to country schools. This may be especially lamentable in view of the rapidity with which the old schools are disappearing from the landscape. Hopefully, the new classification proposed here will spur interest in country school buildings and their function in the not-to-distant past. Country schools are credited with educating the vast majority of America's children before they consolidated. Surely, their buildings deserve the attention of researchers before they disappear altogether from the landscape.

Table 4

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN TYPES

I. END FLUSH DOOR

Extant

1. Fagan
2. Hazel Dell
3. Hill
4. McKee
5. Moore
6. Myers
7. Oakland
8. Perry
9. Pleasant Hill
10. Pleasant View
11. Vandeventer (ruins)

Non-Extant

1. Benville
2. Bottom Prairie
3. Byrnes
4. Harper
5. Patterson
6. Robinson

II. END FLUSH DOUBLE DOORS

Extant

1. DeWitt
2. North Bend

Non-Extant

1. Ferndale
2. Petri
3. Quinlan

(Continues on Next Page)

III. END SINGLE RECESSED DOOR

Extant

1. Clark
2. Ferguson
3. Grove
4. Lester
5. Little Missouri
6. Williams

Non-Extant

1. Council
2. Fargo
3. Lynn

IV. END DOUBLE RECESSED DOORS

Extant

1. Adams
2. Barton
3. Morrellville

V. ENCLOSED END ENTRANCE

Extant

1. Poe

Non-Extant

2. Gilbirds

VI. SIDE DOOR

Extant

1. Shank

VII. HIPPED ROOF

Extant

1. Ebenezer (ruins)
2. Hall

VIII. NEW LOOK

Extant

1. Bell
2. Hambaugh
3. Washington

NO INFORMATION ON DESIGN OF NON-EXTANT SCHOOLS

1. Buckhorn
2. Cross Roads
3. Dale
4. Fairview
5. Friendly
6. Howes
7. LaGrange
8. Liberty
9. McDaniel
10. Mounds
11. New
12. Olive
13. Pell
14. Reddick
15. Sand Ridge
16. Sunny Hill
17. White Oak

Table 5

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN TYPES BY NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE

Type	Number	Percentage*
I	17	40.5
II	5	11.9
III	9	21.4
IV	3	7.1
V	2	4.8
VI	1	2.4
VII	2	4.8
VIII	3	7.1
TOTAL	42	100.0

* % of the 42 schools for which design type can be determined.

NOTES

[1]Wayne E. Fuller, *The Old Country School* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. vii.

[2]Henry Barnard, *School Architecture* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1848), p. 57.

[3]James Johonnot, *Country School-Houses* (New York: Ivison, Phinney, Blakeman & Co., 1866), p. 48.

[4]Illinois Department of Public Instruction, *The One-Room and Village Schools in Illinois* (Springfield: Illinois Department of Public Instruction, 1912), p. 42.

[5]Wayne E. Fuller, *The Old Country School* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 72.

[6]*Ibid.*

[7]*Ibid.*

[8]Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country Schools* (Washington: The Preservation Press, 1984), p. 166.

[9]William A. Alcott, *Essay on the Construction of School Houses* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little, Wilkinson, Richardson, Lord, and Holbrook, 1832).

[10]Henry Barnard, *School Architecture* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1848); Charles P. Dwyer, *The Economy of Church Parsonage and School Architecture* (Buffalo: Phinney & Co., 1856); James Johonnot, *Country School Houses (New York: Ivison, Phinney, Blakeman & Co., 1866); Samuel Eveleth, School-House Architecture* (New York: George E. Woodward, 1870).

[11]Fred E. H. Schroeder, "Schoolhouse Reading: What You Can Learn from Your Rural School," *History News* (April, 1981).

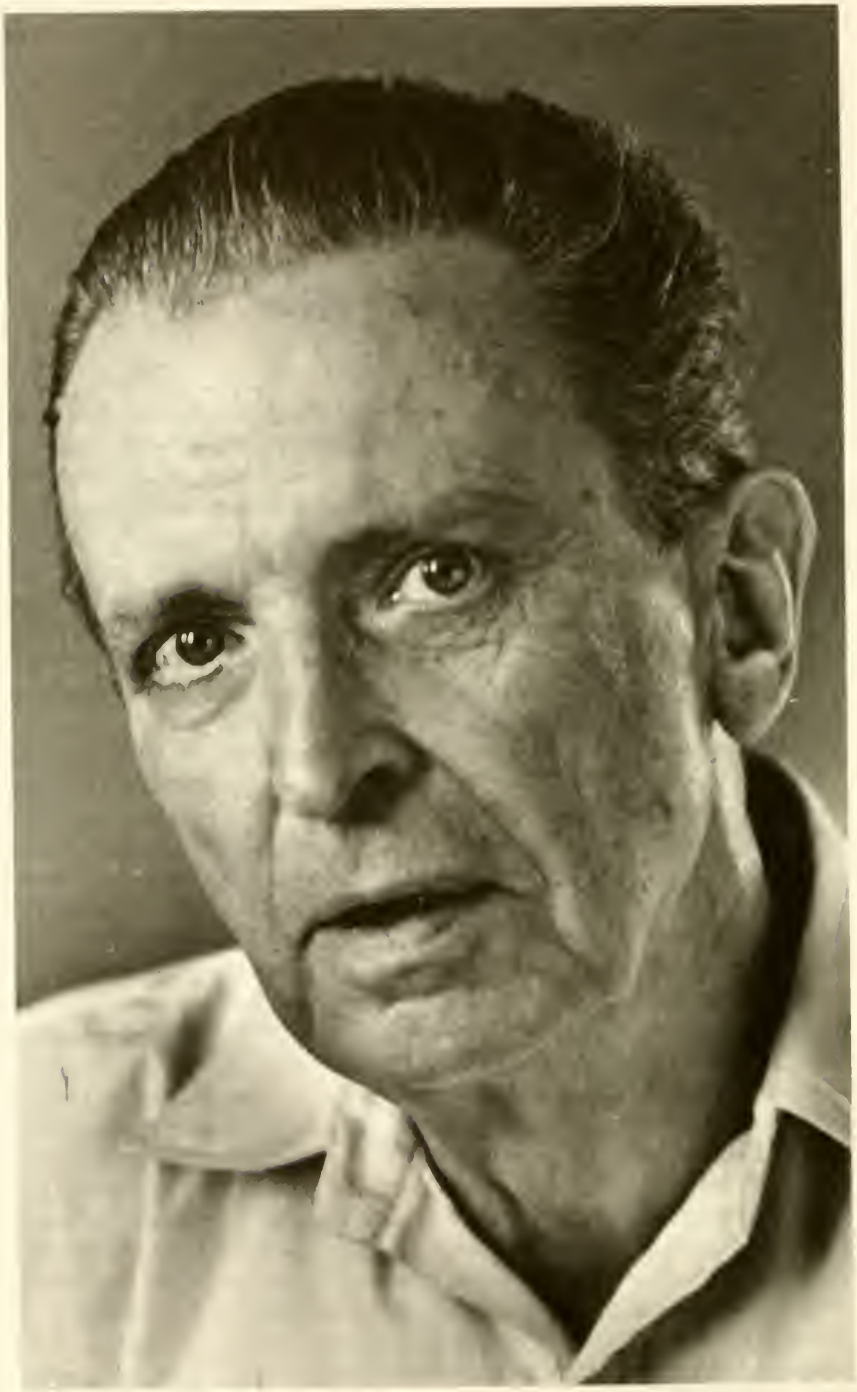
[12]Barnard, p. 31. "A separate entry . . . for each sex," Barnard elaborated on page 56, "will prevent much confusion, rudeness, and impropriety, and promote the health, refinement, and orderly habits of the children."

J. F. POWERS AND THE CATHOLIC CLERGYMAN

Charles W. Mayer

In "Jamesie" (1947), one his early stories, J. F. Powers gives an impression of what it was like to grow up in an Illinois town in the 1920's. It is a world of Model T Fords and Hupmobiles, calliopes, Rosebud Salve, and Green River soda pop — a world in which the week looks forward to the big Sunday game between the Jayville Indees (Independents) and the Beardstown Barons from 60 miles away. Jamesie, whose early fascination with Sir Lancelot, Oliver Twist, and Gulliver has given way to Baseball Bill and the *Sporting News,* is disillusioned when his Jayville pitching hero, Lefty, throws the big game for the gamblers and ends up in jail. Jayville, it seems certain, is Jacksonville, where Powers was born in 1917 and lived for his first seven years until his family moved to Rockford.

Born a Catholic, Powers later spoke of the downstate community of his birth: "It was a town settled by Southerners. The town was Protestant. The best people were Protestants and you felt that . . . . It made me mad."[1] In his novel *Morte D'Urban,* the central figure, a Catholic boy who becomes a priest, remembers growing up in a small Illinois town where the Protestants "felt that it was their country, handed down to them by the Pilgrims . . . and that they were taking a risk in letting you live in it."[2] After "Jamesie," Jacksonville has not figured noticeably in Powers' fiction, but memories of his early life there may have influenced the shape of the many Catholic-centered works that he has written since. Of more direct influence, probably, were his high school years spent, after another family move, at Quincy Academy, formerly an adjunct of Quincy College. Taught by Franciscan fathers, the Academy classes brought young Powers, who had attended public schools in Rockford, into close contact with the cloistered arm of the Church, with its administrators, and with some of the boys who would enter it in years to come. Very likely his experiences there gave him the "feel" of some things requisite for becoming the closest observer of the Catholic clergy in American literature. After his school years the life of the future author shifted to Chicago and various jobs, to classes at Northwestern, and eventually to Minnesota, where he lives today and teaches creative writing one term a year at St. John's University in Collegeville.



J. F. Powers. Courtesy of the Public Information Office, St. John's University.

Powers has not been prolific. He once remarked that he wished he could write five excellent, memorable books.[3] In the late summer of 1988 that wish came true with the publication of only his second novel, *Wheat That Springeth Green,* his first novel, *Morte D'Urban,* having been published long before in 1962. The lengthy hiatus surprises many readers, for *Morte D'Urban* was well received (though not by some in the Catholic community) and won the highly regarded National Book Award for 1963.[4] Published still earlier, at decent intervals, were two collections of short stories, *Prince of Darkness* (1947) and *The Presence of Grace* (1956). Many of the pieces in these volumes appeared first in *The New Yorker* and in such journals as *Accent* and *Commonweal.* One more volume of stories, *Look How the Fish Live* (1976), was published two decades later. The title story of this book is not about the Church, being centered philosophically on death in nature and its relationship to human cultures. Although he has written other stories on such subjects as racial intolerance and life in the suburbs, Powers' principal focus has always been the Catholic churchman and his life beyond the pulpit — his participating in what John Keble calls "the trivial round, the common task" of daily life and his coping with the problems of trying to live with one foot in both worlds, secular and spiritual. This focus has brought Powers considerable artistic and some commercial success and is, exclusively, what I shall treat in this introduction to his work. And the purpose here is to survey the work, not to evaluate or select just the best of the author's fiction. For example, one of his more celebrated stories, "The Valiant Woman," about a priest's inability to stand up to a blood-sucking housekeeper, is not part of the discussion at all.

In the course of his long writing career, Powers has presented a rich variety of pictures that catch the Catholic clergy out of their sacerdotal robes and in all of their human inperfections: pictures of strong masterful bishops and weak ones whose diocesan officials, behind the scenes, grasp at the levers of power; comic pictures too of oddly stubborn, taciturn, or secretive pastors, lowly frustrated curates, and an occasional lofty archbishop or dean. The reader is privy to the personal relationships between working priests and the mild unworldly friars who assist them and the nuns who must serve them, often in demeaning roles. Inside the rectory are shrewd or despotic housekeepers and conspiratorial janitors. Outside it are laymen who, like con men, move from parish to parish hawking their religious wares. At center stage is the continuing skirmish between the older priest, long installed and in charge, and his curate who yearns futilely for promotion or arrives fresh from the seminary ill prepared to cope with the willful eccentricities or studied neglect of the "Boss." The skirmish is at its best in *Wheat That Springeth Green,* in which the pastor's old-fashioned, practical values are in conflict with the trendy ways of his assistant and suggest Powers' growing conservative point of view toward Church policies and practices.

In the interest of summary, the author's priests can be classified by

type, although clearly few of his characters lack individuality or distinctiveness. The first type might be called the true "prince of darkness," the compassionless priest — mean spirited, tyrannical, isolated in his complacency and opposition to any disturbance of his peace. In these portraits, usually products of his early writing, Powers trades complexity for the vividness of characterization and conflict. In one of these, "The Lord's Day," Sunday belongs not to Him but to Father, who rules a dozen sisters (apostles!) with an iron hand, chopping down the mulberry trees that give them shade and drinking Beer in the cool while, inside, they must count the collection through the long hot afternoon. In the end Father nimbly turns aside the Mother Superior's plea for a stove that will work. Sexism, implicit in the situation, is made emphatic when the young curate receives Father's Blessing as he goes off to play a Sunday game of golf.

In a second example of this type, "The Forks," a monsignor torments his curate because the young man is ignorant of the social graces and, worse, is not really interested in them. Father Eudex doesn't care if green olives are not eaten in tutti-fruit salad. Moreover, he contemplates buying a Model-A Ford instead of an impressive car he cannot afford; he doesn't shave under his armpits; and in a crowning violation he shows that he doesn't know the forks at table. "To be quite frank with you, Father," the senior priest announces, "I think you need broadening."[5] Embittered because a bishopric has eluded him, Monsignor rolls around town in his large car, the symbol of his power, "toasting passers-by with a wave that was better than a blessing" (p. 125). A climax arrives when Father Eudex informs Monsignor, who rants against unions and strikes, that he may turn over to the strikers' relief fund a public relations check he has received from the local company plagued by a strike. The anti-climax that follows makes "The Forks" distinctive. After Monsignor retires to his room, Father Eudex interviews a parishoner seeking advice about the money left her by a recently deceased husband. At cross purposes, the conversation goes nowhere, and it finally occurs to Father that the woman has come not for the recommendation of an appropriate charity but for a broker's tip, which, of course, Monsignor would be able to supply. Guilty now of youthful idealism instead of social blunders, Father Eudex is left at the end, like the Mother Superior in "The Lord's Day," lonely, frustrated and nearly defeated.

A variation of the tyrant is the entrenched priest, jealously guarding the status quo and resisting, somewhat absurdly, the slightest suggestion of a threat to the established order. The comic story "Dawn" shows how a parishoner, quite unintentionally through a trivial action, throws the Bishop's palace guard into disarray. In her simple way, the woman pierces the old-boy network to score an ironic point against its power and pretense.

A second Powers type is the ambitious priest, usually thwarted in his desires by the wisdom of a superior who recognizes that his enterprising spirit lacks true spiritual awareness. Talented and disconsolate, this man follows the path of secular pleasures and comforts, thinking all the while

that he might be better off in some other business. Excluding Father Urban in *Morte D'Urban,* the memorable figure of this type is Father Burner, the subject of three more-or-less related stories. The first of these, "Prince of Darkness," is the long title piece of the author's first story collection. Burner, mildly gluttonous and overweight, fortyish, and deeply disappointed after years of waiting for advancement, considers buying life insurance from a BCL (Big Catholic Layman) despite finding his hucksterism distasteful. By seriously considering this means of insuring the body and at the same time feeling ashamed to let others know of it, Father Burner reveals the ambivalent state of his soul. He spends large amounts of time eating and drinking, playing golf, and flying an airplane; but he broods on his failure as a priest and is haunted by the sense that the mark of the true priest "was on every priest he could think of, including a few on the bum . . . . But it was not on him, not properly" (pp. 253-54).

It seems clear that Burner cannot escape the sobriquet "Prince of Darkness" (bestowed by the cathedral dean because of the rectory darkroom the curate has rigged up for another of his hobbies) so long as he resents the Dean and others who have succeeded and continues to blame them or the fates for his own long-standing miseries. Appealing to the Archbishop for promotion, he is told to look not "hard to right and left" but "to ourselves, the devil in us" (p. 274). At the end Burner learns that he has received, instead of his own church, reassignment to assist a pastor in still another parish. The second Father Burner story, "Death of a Favorite," appears in the subsequent collection, *The Presence of Grace.* Outrageously comic, it is the only work of fiction by this author that turns upon a supernatural event. Another eccentric aspect is that the narrator from first to last is Fritz the cat, beloved by the pastor, old Father Malt, hated and resented by Father Burner, who stands second in Malt's affections. Fritz becomes the victim of a cruel hoax perpetrated by the curate and a visiting priest when the pastor is away. After conditioning the cat to fear the cross by repeatedly pushing its face into a crucifix, the plotters tell the returned Father Malt, who was once an exorcist, that the beast appears to be possessed. Fleeing, Fritz is run over by a car and is at once reborn and redeemed from his fear, reclaiming his place on the pastor's lap, the "favorite" still. Father Burner, thus, emerges from this episode without a solution to the problem of his soul, though it has been suitably chastened by the victorious Fritz, who found himself "wondering if I could possibly bring about his transfer to another parish — one where they had a devil for a pastor and several assistants, where he would be able to start at the bottom again."[6]

A variation of the Burner type is the ambitious priest whose shemes are successful, who can insinuate himself into influential places and manipulate those in power to his own advantage. Father Gau in "Keystone" is such a man. He subtly persuades his aging bishop to become a master builder — to bulldoze the old cemetery, removing the graves to an unused airstrip so that a new church can be built on consecrated ground.

The Bishop's peace of mind is lost forever, partly because the ostentatious new cathedral lacks a keystone; but Gau is triumphant, having cleared the way for himself to become bishop someday soon. In an early essay, Powers, as part of a larger irony, wryly anticipated the Father Gau type by referring to St. Francis of Assisi: "They asked him why he didn't get his little brothers organized on a paying basis — more buildings and some office equipment."[7]

Still another kind of priest, one that is central to much of the fiction, is the redeemed man, he who errs or is dominated by pride, ambition, or materialism — or feels he is — and then finds himself strangely in the presence of grace. Showing what happens to those priests and suggesting how it happens and why produces a complexity and even an ambiguity missing in some of the author's other portraits. Among the most suggestive of these stories are two or three in which the flawed priest, the type Powers likes to satirize so effectively, becomes almost despite himself the means of another priest's salvation. The redemption theme was introduced in one of Powers' earliest and most admired stories, "Lions, Harts, Leaping Does."[8] The setting is a Franciscan monastery, the protagonist Didymus, whose crisis of soul begins with his feeling of guilt over the death of a friend and continues inexorably to his own death. Having refused — for no good reason — the invitation to visit a friend he has not seen for decades, Didymus is stricken with remorse soon afterwards when he learns that the man has died. The prolonged view of Didymus examining his conscience is handled with subtlety and control. The dying friar feels to the end that he has failed to achieve salvation; but there is convincing evidence that, despite the bulk of criticism to the contrary,[9] he has in fact attained a state of grace by his renewed sympathy with other creatures, both human and animal, and by his resignation to the will of God.

In the last of his three stories, Father Burner himself attains a measure of grace, it seems, gaining in the process the respect and friendship of Fritz the narrator-cat. The change in Burner begins in "Defection of a Favorite" when Father Malt goes on a trip and leaves his long-suffering assistant in charge. Surprisingly, he does well, carrying out the most trivial of duties and taking a genuine interest in the welfare of his flock. He even comes to appreciate Fritz when the Archbishop compliments him for being liked by an animal. In the key moment following Malt's return, when he sees that the old pastor can never give up his place while he lives, Father Burner addresses him gracefully, thus earning grace: " 'Hello, boss,' he said. 'Glad you're back' " (*Presence*, p. 129). In such commonplace scenes are found this author's artistic strength. Nothing highly dramatic, nothing sensational or filled with profundity. Just an ordinary moment in rectory life, topped off with a gesture of good will and acceptance. The potential of a man who, in "Prince of Darkness," was so uncomfortably aware of his false position is beginning to be realized. He may yet become "a true priest."

In the title story of his second book *The Presence of Grace,* Powers is more explicit than he usually is about the meaning of his redemption theme, expressing it there precisely in both the title and the resolution. "The Presence of Grace" occupies a place in his canon very like "The Artificial Nigger" in the canon of that other Catholic writer, Flannery O'Connor. In both, the characters are redeemed by God's grace, and in both the word *grace* itself is used in the end so that there will be no mistakening its significance. In "The Presence of Grace" young Father Fabre has accepted an invitation to dine with a parishioner who, it turns out, has an unmarried man living in her house. Because he appears to be blessing an unholy relationship, the powerful Altar and Rosary Society is immediately up in arms and comes in force to complain to Fabre's superior. The curate, who hopes for a church of his own, is afraid. He has had little respect for the pastor, whose parish he thinks is badly run and the man himself not sufficiently liberal or progressive. Yet, in his interview with the ladies, the pastor becomes an agent of grace by refusing to answer their charges and defeating them with an ambiguous phrase, " *'S not so*" (p. 187-89), that might mean several things, even possibly that the accused couple was innocent. Whereas the grandfather and grandson in "The Artificial Nigger" are bursting with pride, Father Fabre seems at first to be guilty of little more than youthful naiveté. Yet his mild scorn for the eccentric ways of his pastor and belief that he might do a better job himself indicate that he needs to be saved not so much from the Church ladies as from his own proud self. At the end he thinks humbly of the man who saved him: "Life was a dark business for everyone in it, but the way for pastors was ever lit by flares of special grace" (p. 190). And some of that grace flows to Father Fabre as he hears the pastor in the dim baptismal naive "opening a few windows" (p. 191).

Hagopian states that it would be naive to see positive virtue in men like the pastor, who simply denies things whether they are true or not; but Hoffman suggests that Fabre has seen only the old priest's exterior, his weird obsession for privacy and unwillingness to communicate, and only in the climax sees his "ancient wisdom" responding under pressure.[10] By examining an earlier Father Fabre story in *The Presence of Grace,* one can conclude that Hoffman might be a little closer to the truth. In "A Losing Game" Fabre is the new curate of, presumably, the same pastor. The young man needs a writing table for his room and is taken into a jungle of a basement, where the pastor first ignores the perfect table, recommending a brokendown chair, and then accientally shoots his curate in the leg with a .22 rifle he uses to kill rats. Frustrated, exasperated, and filled with self-pity, Fabre is regarded casually in his wounded state by his superior and laughed at by the doctors and nurses at the hospital. Upon his return, he finds that the pastor has installed in his room the dilapidated chair as a reward for his suffering. Perhaps the pastor is something of a fool, but he also may be unconsciously wise, teaching his curate that the things of this world, represented by the chaos of the basement, are

ultimately of no account and should be secondary to things of the spirit and to forbearance and acceptance. In a more indirect way than "The Presence of Grace," "A Losing Game" makes use of the older, somewhat misanthropic priest who frowns on progressive church activities to bring his young assistant to an examination of himself and the values he has lived by hitherto.

"A Losing Game," metaphorically through its title and dramatically through the frustrations of Father Fabre, sums up an important idea of Powers' fiction as a whole: "You can't win." It is a statement made or confirmed by the author more than once.[11] He means, of course, can't win in this life. Yet it is significant that he adds, in a Hemingway-like way, "but you can go down like a winner. You can live well and die well."[12] Living well for Powers is what both his novels are about and is very much dependent upon the state of one's soul. The protagonists of these works, Father Urban in *Morte D'Urban* and Joe Hackett in *Wheat That Springeth Green*, are quite different — Joe is anything but "urbane" — but in one crucial sense they are alike: each is saved, not from the world of "Dreck" that defeats his attempts to be an efficient, progressive priest, but from himself, his own false self. Each can be described, therefore, as belonging to the category of the redeemed priest.

Father Urban is a super salesman for the monastic Order of St. Clement (a Powers invention). On the road much of the time, he dines well, drinks the best liquor, and rests in soft beds. Possessing intelligence, eloquence, and the spirit of enterprise, he deplores the mediocrity of the men running the Order, whom he sees as inefficient, impractical, amateurish, and sometimes quaint. Then on the heels of his greatest coup — engineering the gift of a new office building in downtown Chicago — he is inexplicably sent to Minnesota, where the Order's new foundation is trying to survive against the cold rural landscape. Urban thinks that he has been handed "the green banana" for his many efforts and achievements (p. 30). All his former comforts disappear. He is nagged for installing a portable heater by Wilf, the chief, who recommends long underwear. The main occupation of the inexpert priests is painting the decrepit rooms of the old building. Eventually, however, Urban discovers an outlet for his talents: he designs and builds a golf course, which brings immediate fame and popularity to the faltering Christian venture.

Yet all is not well with Urban. The focus of his life is increasingly secular, epitomized by his devotion to the golf course. Powers' comic genius is working full force in the climax, which arrives when Urban is hit on the head by a golf ball struck by the local bishop, who, it was feared, was about to confiscate the whole operation and establish a seminary. A low handicapper himself, Urban ironically has had no fear of the Bishop on the course. After the accident, which sends him to the hospital with a concussion, Urban is never the same again. His fear evaporates, along with his desires to demonstrate his skills with the long irons to admiring students. As it is often pointed out, however, he isn't a new man yet. He

must undergo a set of three trials before the ambitious man of the world may give way to the spiritual man. First, he willingly loses the support of a powerful woman by trying to help her maid, whom the old invalid has coldly victimized in dominoes. Second, on a fishing trip he foils the attempt of his friend and benefactor, Billy, to drown a deer in the lake and is in turn ditched and abandoned by Billy. He resists, finally, the seductive wiles of a pretty woman who gives him a second hit on the head with her shoe. Hoffman has called these incidents the temptations of the world, the devil, and the flesh.[13] In the end Father Urban is elected Provincial of the Chicago province of the Clementines, and instead of being the enterprising modern leader he himself has wanted to see, is indifferent to progress, disappointing in his adherence to the old, inefficient people and programs, and even, strangely enough, becoming known for his piety. *Morte D'Urban,* as Powers admitted, has some parallels with Malory and the Arthurian legends,[14] but one need go no further than the title for the richest suggestions. Urban or "Urbane," the refined, polished, cultured man of the world, dies, and the man of God is born.

The new novel, *Wheat That Springeth Green,* is more subtle in some ways than the earlier one, and almost certainly more complex and ambiguous. Joe Hackett's progress toward salvation, or at least a state of grace, is not quite so clear as Urban's because his need is less obvious. One of the first reviews has stated the theme in the form of a question: "How can the higher, saintlier ideals of the priestly calling be reconciled with the average priest's earthbound responsibilities?"[15] As a pastor with many troubled parishioners and demanding Church superiors, Joe faces decisions that test his conscience and personal mortality. Unlike Urban before his rebirth, he resists the temptation to surrender to expediency and the pressures of the Mall crowd of his suburban parish, epitomized by the Great Badger, "the discount house with a heart."[16] Resists until the end, at least; for the climax of the novel is cloaked in a certain ambiguity and raises a number of questions: What exactly happens to Joe, why does it happen, and, finally what is its full significance? Only by answering these questions, it would seem, might one come to a reasonable understanding of the meaning and force of *Wheat That Springeth Green.*

The novel begins with brief pictures of Joe's childhood, his Rabelaisian sexual initiation (comic but not entirely convincing), and his life in the seminary, where he decides to go the way of prayer and contemplation, acquiring a hair shirt and leading a small group of boys toward the goal of sanctity. Once he asks his teacher, "Father, how can we make sanctity as attractive as sex to the common man?" (p. 48) This role is dropped abruptly, however, on his first job as curate to a true contemplative, whose "horny grey growth on the knees" (p. 74) suggest to the apprentice that other priestly paths might be more suitable for him. Years later, in possession of his own church, Joe has become very different, running a highly efficient, businesslike operation respected throughout the diocese. The Church itself is just a "glorified Quonset hut" (p. 99), but Joe decided to

build a school first and a modern rectory, complete with comfortable rooms, good plumbing, and excellent offices for himself and a curate he hopes to acquire. In obtaining permission from the Archbishop (Arch) to build, he had practical reasons for saving the church for last and impressed the Arch by referring to his old office: "is this any way to carry on the most important business in the world? The only business in this world that'll matter a damn in the next?" (p. 101)[17]

Joe Hackett is a testy guy, easily riled by life and especially by his new curate Bill, who turns up without knowing how to type a word and, moreover, not caring that he doesn't know how. Joe is also short, middle aged and out of shape, and likes to eat and drink too much. In fact, he is something of a boozer. And he is lonely, seeking "priestly fellowship" with the younger generation. Some of the better chapters focus on his attempt to establish rapport with Bill and his friends, who espouse advanced beliefs on Church laws and practices, such as the celibacy of the priesthood. Joe sets them straight: "Life's not a cookout by Brueghel the Elder and people know it" (p. 199). In time, Joe establishes a kind of paternal relationship with Bill, teaching him that being a priest in a middle-class suburb is "a tough assignment, without the romantic props of a slum parish, bums, pigeons, and so on" (p. 174). And Bill begins to admire Joe because, though he is a traditionist in Church matters, Joe is not an establishment priest. Quite the opposite. He won't allow prayer in church for passage of a bill in Congress to bring defense contracts to the community; he refuses a bribe by a parishioner to get his children into the school; he tries to protect his flock from extortion by the Archbishop; and he successfully counsels a young man to obey his conscience on the decision of reporting to the armed services or going off to Canada. The year is 1968, a troubled time in America. It is not well known that Powers himself refused induction in World War II and spent many months in jail. At that time he wrote in *The Catholic Worker* (which Joe Hackett, incidentally, sends contributions to) that Catholics can be conscientious objectors and, regarding the Church's support of war, stated, "The Upholstery of Christianity has held up better than the idea and the practice."[18]

For his actions Joe is harassed and harried from all sides. Finally, in a trivial affair, which he has tried to hold firm on for symbolic reasons, he caves in to the Archbishop and the Mall crowd. In despair and near a breakdown, he goes to Canada himself for a time, then, upon his return, goes immediately to see the Arch. In the last line of the novel we learn that Joe has been transferred to Holy Cross, a city slum parish with no curate, and that his ne'er-do-well pal Lefty has his old place. Was Joe punished or did he ask for a change? Probably the latter. And probably he did it to save himself. While he is admirably full of integrity and responsibility, Joe seems to have lost touch with the feelings of people, particularly his own parishioners. Speaking of his special system of church collections, he says, "We just present the bill for services rendered, like doctors and

lawyers" (p. 151). And his obession with the famous rectory offices suggests his condition. It is important to Joe, for instance, for Bill to learn to keep the cover on his typewriter and the toilet seat down in his lavatory. Another sign is Joe's boozing, which has become excessive. In Montreal, before he leaves, he finds himself working long hours with "the loving and, yes, lovable derelicts," who puked in his car twice (pp. 332-33). Beyond the irony of those words is the suggestion of a real change; for, of course, he will be doing that kind of work at Holy Cross. It even seems at the end that Joe has stopped drinking.

One of the early reviewers has noted that it is not for nothing that the novel's last word is "cross."[19] As a boy Joe carried the cross in a religious play, and ended by dropping it on another boy who was to become his long-time rival and chief enemy in the Archbishop's camp. This time he will probably bear his cross willingly and without complaint. His old friend and confessor, Father Day, told him once, "Despair's really presumption, you know. Expecting too much. We can't change the world, Joe. Our Blessed Lord couldn't do it, Joe. But we can change ourselves. That's enough" (p. 106). Powers said after *Morte D'Urban* that it is not a bad thing for an American to lose the aggressive "be a winner" point of view, that it made Father Urban a wiser and better man.[20] Joe won't be a builder any longer, nor will he be able to fight the world from a position of strength. The material world seems to have defeated him. But much may be gained. In *Morte D'Urban,* when the "Rule of St. Clement and the Rites of the Order" is read, Father Urban hears these lines:

> Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. How?
> By the toil of humility, by the emotions of compassion, by the ecstasy of contemplation. (p. 329)

That appears to be a likely prescription for Father Joe. Christ said, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it . . ." (Mark: 8. 34-35) The French carol from which Powers' title comes suggests very much the same thing:

> Now the green blade riseth
> from the buried grain,
> wheat that in dark earth
> many days has lain;
> love lives again, that
> with the dead has been:
> Love is come again like
> wheat that springeth green. (Preface)

In Joe's new parish, love will be life. At least he will be trying to make it so. Nothing else will matter.

Powers' literary masters were Sinclair Lewis, Katherine Anne Porter, and Evelyn Waugh; but *Wheat That Springeth Green* reminds me more of

Saul Bellow than anyone else. The presentation of deeply disturbing problems through a comic tone,[21] the criticism of contemporary life through a combination of ideas and dramatic scene, the humanistic philosophy, the superb imitation of the American idiom — all are among Bellow's notable qualities. The voice rendering Joe Hackett's speech and thought is special and will prompt papers that define that voice and the effects it produces. On the whole, the book promises to become the author's masterpiece.

J. F. Powers has lived elsewhere much of his adult life, but his roots are in Illinois. After years in the Northland, he was quoted as saying, "But I'm just not a Minnesota boy . . . I can't understand the hunting season — people driving home with deers [sic] strapped on their fenders. And they take their football so seriously here. Much worse than Illinois. Minnesotans are much more of a people, a group apart."[22] Unquestionably his years in St. Cloud and other heavily Catholic communities in Minnesota have given him the settings for many of his stories and both of his novels, but it seems also true that his early life in Illinois played its part in preparing him to become the author who receives the kind of praise bestowed some time ago by the respected author and critic Frank O'Connor: Powers is "among the greatest of living story-tellers."[23]

NOTES

[1]Quoted by Donald McDonald, "Interview with J. F. Powers," *The Critic* 19 (Oct.-Nov. 1960): 88.

[2]J. F. Powers, *Morte D'Urban* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), p. 76. Further references will be in the text by page number.

[3]Reported in *Time*, 29 Aug. 1988, p. 70.

[4]Compared to many other authors, Powers' output has been small. He has often said that he is lazy, but the actual reason seems to be that his love of artistic perfection has prevented him from publishing a work until every line has been cut and clarified to meet his standards.

[5]J. F. Powers, *Prince of Darkness and Other Stories* (New York: Doubleday, 1951), p. 130. Further references will be in the text by page number.

[6]J. F. Powers, *The Presence of Grace* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 46. Further references will be in the text by page number.

[7]J. F. Powers, "A Saint on the Air," *The Catholic Worker* 10 (Dec. 1943), p. 8.

[8]"Lions, Harts, Leaping Does" was chosen for both the Martha Foley and O. Henry prize collections of 1944.

[9]Critics who argue against Didymus' salvation are cited by John V. Hagoplan, *J. F. Powers*, (New York: Twayne, 1968), p. 69.

[10]Hagopian, pp. 103, 107; Arnold R. Hoffman, *The Sense of Place: Peter De Vries, J. F. Powers, and Flannery O'Connor* (Ann Arbor: University Microflims, 1980), pp. 99-100.

[11]Bob Lundegaard, "Author: Writing Is Sweaty Job," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune,* 7 April 1963: Feature Section 1; Sister Kristin Malloy, "The Catholic and Creativity: J. F. Powers," *American Benedictine Review* 15 (Mar. 1964), p. 76.

[12]Malloy, p. 76.

[13]Hoffman, pp. 132-33.

[14]Malloy, p. 80.

[15]*New York Times,* 30 Aug. 1988, p. 12.

[16]J. F. Powers, *Wheat That Springeth Green* (New York: Knopf, 1988), p. 104. Further references will be in the text by page number.

[17]Matthew Hoehn, in "James Farl Powers," *Catholic Authors* (Newark: St. Mary's Abbey, 1952), p. 456, quotes Powers as saying much the same thing that Joe Hackett was to say many years later: "He has said that he writes of priests because they are engaged in the only race worth running and that their failures and successes are, therefore, more truly stories."

[18]J. F. Powers, "A Night in the County Jail," *The Catholic Worker* 10 (May 1943), p. 8. More than twenty years after his own refusal to be inducted, Powers reviewed a book about a young Austrian who was beheaded because he refused to fight in Hitler's army. Besides questioning whether it was the obligation of the loyal citizen always to obey the secular authority, Powers questions the Church, which "has so often run with the hounds," for not being a moral force in questions of war. J. F. Powers, Review of *In Solitary Witness: The Life and Death of Franz Jagerstatter* by Gordon Zahn, in *Commentary* 40 (July 1965), pp. 91-92.

[19]Time, 29 Aug. 1988. p. 69.

[20]Malloy, p. 72.

[21]"I see the human situation as essentially comic," Powers has told Sister Kristin Malloy, p. 69.

[22]Lundegaard, p. 1.

[23]Frank O'Connor, "Reflections of a Petty World," *Saturday Review of Literature* 39 (24 Mar. 1956), p. 22.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

One of the more interesting scholarly projects related to Illinois is "The Lincoln Legals," being conducted by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Those in charge of the project, Cullom Davis and William D. Beard, are preparing an accurate, complete, and annotated edition of Lincoln's law practice. They are requesting public assistance in locating any document, record, letter, contemporaneous printed account, or after-the-fact recollection that relates to that law practice. All communications should be sent to The Lincoln Legals, IPHA Drawer 166, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62701, or individuals may contact the editors by phone: 217-785-9130.

Another project of regional interest is "Harvesting the River: Life and Work on the Illinois River," a traveling exhibit organized by the Illinois State Museum. The multi-media exhibit will travel on board a renovated tow boat, the *Belle Reynolds,* to 18 communities along Illinois waterways during the autumn of 1989. According to project director Craig Colten, "Artifacts, historical photographs, and specially prepared graphics will tell the story of the people who wrested a living from the river valley." Special programs are being planned to coincide with the visit of "Harvesting the River" to the various communities. The unique floating exhibit is being supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Illinois Humanities Council, and the Caterpillar Foundation. For more information, contact Craig Colten, Illinois State Museum, Spring and Edwards Streets, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

The Seventh Illinois Literary Heritage Conference will be held at Western Illinois University on October 16. Sponsored by the Secretary of State's READ ILLINOIS Advisory Committee, the conference features sessions on Illinois literature, readings by Illinois writers, and exhibits of Illinois books by large and small presses. The keynote speaker will be Illinois poet Dave Etter, author of *Alliance, Illinois* and other books. Among the many presentations will be talks on Edgar Lee Masters, Gwendolyn Brooks, Jane Addams, and children's authors. The conference starts at 9:00 a.m. and includes a luncheon. The public is invited. For program information, or to register, phone 309-298-1911, or write Margene Weiss, Director of Non-Credit Programs, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois 61455.

The Tenth Annual Illinois History Symposium will be held in Springfield on December 1 or 2. Of special interest this year will be sessions commemorating the Centennial of the Illinois State Historical Library and the Sesquicentennial of the Old State Capitol. For more information, contact Carl Oblinger, Head, Office of Research and Education, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62701, or phone 217-785-7957.

Western Illinois Regional Studies will publish a special issue on "The Region's Communities" in the fall of 1990. Those interested in submitting papers on such matters as frontier towns, community profiles for historic periods, the pattern of county settlement, community architecture, and ethnic concentrations are invited to contact the issue editor, Donald W. Griffin, Tillman Hall 413, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois 61455. The deadline for submissions is June 1, 1990.

John E. Hallwas
Western Illinois University

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

MOSTLY GOOD AND COMPETENT MEN: ILLINOIS GOVERNORS, 1818 TO 1988. By Robert P. Howard. Springfield, Ill.: Illinois Issues—Sangamon State University, and the Illinois State Historical Society, 1988. Pp. xiii, 397. $24.95, $14.95, paper.

In his 78th year, retired journalist Bob Howard acquired a word processor and started the last stages of his latest book, *Mostly Good and Competent Men.* The book, a collective biography of the thirty-seven men who served as governors of Illinois, reflects many years of research as well as the six decades of professional experience of its author, who knew personally ten of these governors. Howard, who also wrote the current standard history of the state, *Illinois: A History of the Prairie State*, combines the fluency of the master journalist with the careful research and intellectual integrity of the scholar. The result is a book that is a pleasure to read as well as one that can be read with confidence.

Mostly Good and Competent Men (no woman ever ran for the office) allots each governor a chapter. The reader begins with the life of Shadrach Bond and ends with the life of incumbent Governor James R. Thompson. A final chapter gives Howard's personal evaluation of all the governors, and appendices provide a roster of all the chief executives, essays on the four different state constitutions, and a table of election results. There is a bibliographical essay as well as a bibliography. Each biographical chapter begins with a portrait or photograph of its subject, and a wealth of illustrations enlivens the narrative. This is a book to read, to browse and to use as a reference — a book for all seasons.

In *The Past and the Present,* Princeton historian Lawrence Stone defines prosopography as "the investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives." Stone argues that prosopography is a valuable tool, a way to get behind the rhetoric of politics and examine the workings of the machinery of politics and the people who pull the levers. *Mostly Good and Competent Men* is such a tool. From his examination of the Illinois governors, Howard extracts a set of unwritten job specifications for a competent leader. The good governor is one who combines the roles of statesman, administrator and politician, an executive who can comprehend what the people want — and can afford. The competent governor is one who can get both the cooperation of the legislature and the support of the people.

Howard wears his learning and experience lightly, and his pithy descriptions capture the essence of the individual. Samuel H. Shapiro was "a smiling specialist in soft-sell politics." John P. Altgeld, mostly remem-

bered for his pardon of the Haymarket anarchists, was "undersized and undereducated." Unsuccessful candidate Adlai Stevenson III was a candidate with "negative charisma." Shadrach Bond, whose campaign biographies described him as an Indian fighter and a military hero of the War of 1812, was actually "never bothered by an unfriendly Indian or saw a British soldier." And what of the incumbent, James Thompson? Howard tactfully defers judgment on the current chief executive until he leaves office — if he ever does.

Howard had no difficulty selecting the names at the *bottom* of his list, the worst of the state's governors. These are the two who ended political careers in prison. Otto Kerner, who "played the role of Daley's secret agent in the governor's office," resigned the governorship to become a federal judge, and then went to prison after convictions for conspiracy, tax evasion, mail fraud and perjury. Dan Walker, a populist, confrontational and advertisarial governor, went to prison in 1988 for bank fraud and perjury, crimes committed after he left office.

Who were the best governors in Howard's judgment? And why does he rank them at the top? Read the book.

William L. Burton
Western Illinois University

RIVERS, RAILWAYS, AND ROADS. A HISTORY OF HENDERSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS. By Robert P. Sutton. Raritan, Illinois: Henderson County Historical Society, 1988. Pp. 254. $40.

The writing and study of local history in the United States is, as one prominent scholar has noted, "one of the fastest-growing popular intellectual pursuits" in the nation today. It is also the one area where, as Robert P. Sutton, Professor of History at Western Illinois University, has written in his recently published *Rivers, Railways, and Roads. A History of Henderson County, Illinois,* there remains "the only available chunk of America's past that has not been defiled by overuse." In the years since this nation's bicentennial in 1976, a flood of local county or community studies have begun to appear, uneven to be sure in scholarly standards, but all providing to the historical community new material from which a thorough understanding of the past can be gleaned. Now, for the first time in more than seventy-five years, this small section of western Illinois is also represented.

In 1981, the Henderson County Historical Society decided to contract for the publication of an updated history of the area represented by its membership. The first study of the county's past was then almost one hundred years old; the most recent history had appeared in 1911. Those earlier works had consisted "substantially of biographies of subscribers" and though "valuable and interesting" were not believed to be "history in the strict sense." The Society decided it wanted, consistent with Web-

ster's definition of "history," "a systematic account of what has happened in the life and development of a people, country, or institution, usually with an analysis and explanation." According to Stephen G. Evans, whose preface offers a rationale for this current volume, "the goal was to have a volume that contained more than a collection of events and persons; rather historical perspective, world, national, state and local events and their relationships were to be the content of the book." In Sutton, the Society found a distinguished scholar who serves as Director of the Center for Icarian Studies at W. I. U. and who has published widely in various facets of Illinois history. They also found a man who had, by his own admission, never visited the county nor met any of its residents. This latter fact, however, was a conscious choice on the part of the selection committee. "It was felt," writes Evans, "that to achieve the type of history work which we wished, it would be better to have a professional with a different view of the events than that which we might have. We recognized that an outside author might miss some of the insight of residents" but for the 1980s, this seemed preferable to asking a home-town man or woman to author the study.

Appearing after nearly six years of research, this volume is both scholarly and perceptive. It is well-bound in an attractive hardback cover (by, sadly, a Missouri firm instead of one here in Illinois), printed on high-quality paper, neatly type-set, and filled with several hundred interesting and often historically valuable photographs, charts, or drawings. Professor Sutton has read large segments, if not all, of the files of the unusually important *Oquawka Spectator*, which was published from 1848 to 1908 by the influential Patterson family, and the *Raritan Reporter*, which began its run as the county's longest continuous running newspaper in 1884. His use of material from these sources frequently enlivens his history and starts the reader in the direction of understanding the "human side" of Henderson County's past. Even more vital is the author's use of taped interviews of a number of county residents found in the Western Illinois Archives and Special Collections. Many of these interviews, collected in 1980 by Rita Souther, breathe life into the narrative. In attempting to fulfill the wishes of the men and women of the Historical Society who commissioned this book, Sutton does a thoughtful job. Though the Society suggests that perhaps in as few as twenty years another official history may be written, the odds are overwhelming that this volume will be THE standard for at least the next fifty to seventy-five years. This has become, indeed the definitive history of Henderson County upon which all others will have to be based.

In the midst of such well-deserved praise, however, are a number of significant problems. Certainly by far the greatest is the author's attempt to see the "big picture" of both United States and/or Illinois history while still trying to write about county developments. In the past, far too many community and county studies have been so stridently provincial that readers of such works could not possibly have understood where their

locale fit into the broad sweep of American history. In attempting to be faithful to his charge by the county historical society, however, Sutton frequently strays too far in the opposite direction. Page after page of topics that are at best peripheral to Henderson County clutter this volume, forcing the reader's attention away from what ought to be the main topic. There are, for instance, seven full pages on the 1832 Black Hawk War (including a detailed map of the campaign against the Sauk chief and his Indian braves). Though Black Hawk and his followers *did,* indeed, camp for one night on the site of present-day Oquawka immediately after crossing the Mississippi from Iowa and other Indian groups interacted closely with Sumner Phelps whose trading post was in that town, it is hard to justify so many pages on barely related subjects. The same generalizations, however, can be made again and again in this volume. In an effort to inform readers about the experiences of Henderson County men in the Civil War, Sutton gives them long discussions about military tactics and campaigns against the Confederate forces in the South. Because Abraham Lincoln visited the county on his way to Galesburg and his 1858 debate with Stephen Douglas, readers of this volume get a lengthy treatise on Lincoln and his presidency from 1861 to 1865. World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, Vietnam, even Watergate, offer similar situations.

Henderson County is, as one historian had called it, a "backwater county" but Professor Sutton tries valiantly to suggest otherwise. The history of the county, he notes inaccurately in his introduction, is "a history in miniature of the region and the nation. It is a sort of historical cell of the larger body politic. (T)hrough a detailed and careful study of this cell, historians can learn a good deal about the historical physiology and pathology of the American people." Such an upbeat statement must surely have pleased those boosters of Henderson County who think that bigger is best, but it is simply unprovable. Indeed, being a "backwater" or an untypical, isolated region of the nation is not necessarily bad. Many good, hard-working, dedicated persons have always lived in less famous, less dynamic sections of the country than the mainstream of the nation's population. And this clearly does not make them less vital. Nor should one try to prove them otherwise.

One of the most valuable trends in the writing of contemporary local and community history is the use by many younger scholars of statistical, quanitative data to help tell the story of an area or its many residents. Sutton has adopted this approach. Through it he hopes to allow his readers to see such trends as population shifts, ethnic change, and economic development. These are vitally important but, unfortunately, he is so wedded to the mass of excellent data that he has uncovered that he appears unable, or unwilling, to leave any of it out of his book. A reader is barraged with an onslaught of statistics which, at times, never seem to end. Sutton loves numbers and page after page is filled with them. The result are facts that, usually without explanation, add little to our understanding. It may be significant, for instance, to know that 27.5% of

Gladstone Township's population in 1850 came from South Carolina but if so, we are never told why. This pattern is constantly repeated. All too often, statistics take the form of lifeless lists. Is it really necessary to tell us that in 1912, 24 young corn growers vied for prizes at the Henderson County Farmers' Institute, that in 1934, the Raritan Bank had $101,667.20 in cash on hand, or that in 1946, the tomato factory in Lomax filled 100 railroad boxcars with its canned products? Surely not. At the same time, seemingly every institution of any size or consequence in the county receives its due, whether religious group, political organization, or the myriad of individuals who interacted with them. Sutton leaves no doubt that he is a first-rate researcher and scholar but one cannot help wishing that he had not insisted on incorporating every last piece of his data in the body of the text.

On the technical side, there are several other problems. The proofreading is too often sloppy. Whether this was caused by time constraints in getting the manuscript to the publisher is not clear but it is disconcerting to read about "Galdstone" or "Terre Houte" at times. Factual errors appear as well. One of the most intriguing, though not untypical, is Sutton's transformation of Republican Congressman Everett Dirksen (178) into United States Senatorial candidate "William McKinley" Dirksen (228) and then listing Pekin's "Mr. Marigold" as two completely separate individuals in the index. That section of the book is also badly marred. Where some persons, events, or organizations are carefully noted, others are ignored or incompletely cited. The *Oquawka Spectator* is, for example, listed only once though it appears over and over in the text.

A second technical problem is the usage and/or placement of the otherwise fine photographs mentioned above. Many are reprinted in such a small format that they are hard to interpret. Finances for any county history have got to be a major concern but in this case, it would have been worth the extra dollars to have enlarged some of the best views for a permanent record that could have been savored and appreciated for years to come. At the same time, a number of pictures seem to have little rationale for having been used since they are not related to Henderson County while others, on the contrary, seem to have been included only because they were taken somewhere in the county.

Sutton has titled his volume *Rivers, Railways, and Roads*. It is a strangely inappropriate title to the story told. Though the author does tell the ways that each of these links with the "outside world" impacted on Henderson County, the great bulk of the story has nothing to do with any of these. When Professor Sutton zeroes in on county materials, he tells a very interesting story of the people and institutions that have settled and chosen to remain in this little river county. These were good men and women, idealistic at times, foolishly overconfident at others, but it is their story that is told here and certainly not, as the title would suggest, any other.

This is a good study for all its problems. Any one who seeks to know

about Henderson County will want to come to this volume before any other. In many ways, this is a traditional, old-fashioned overview but it is scholarly, serious, and worth the time of any person who cares about the history of western Illinois.

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ILLINOIS. By Gary Irving; text by Kristina Valaitis. Portland, OR: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Co., 1988. Pp. 160. $35.

ILLINOIS: IMAGES OF THE LANDSCAPE. By Willard Clay. Englewood, CO: Westcliffe Publishers, 1988. Pp. 160. $35.

ILLINOIS: A SCENIC DISCOVERY. By Richard Hamilton Smith. Dublin, NH: Foremost Publishers, 1988. Pp. 128. $35.

Surely the greatest coincidence in Illinois publications during recent years is the simultaneous appearance of three books about the state that have the same purpose, format, and price. Those who formerly could not find an oversized volume of color photographs focused on Illinois now have a choice, thanks to Willard Clay, Gary Irving, and Richard Hamilton Smith.

Smith's book is much less impressive than the other two. Although it has many good photographs, and perhaps a few outstanding ones, some are mediocre. One of the best is a shot of the State Capitol rotunda, looking up into the beautiful dome; one of the worst is an undistinguished photograph of cows in a field, in which the field is out of focus. The Smith book does have balance, mixing images of Chicago, the state parks, the countryside, and historic sites, but none of his photographs are as good as the best by Clay and Irving. And the brief Introduction by Hal Higdon is not a particularly insightful overview of the state.

The other two volumes are superbly done. Clay's *Illinois: Images of the Landscape* has one stunning photograph after another. The reader (or viewer) who is familiar with Illinois will be surprised to discover that the state has such uncommon beauty. Clay was primarily interested in the remaining wild places, so his shots reflect Starved Rock State Park, Horseshoe Lake, Shawnee National Forest, the Mississippi River, and so on. He also includes enough images of farms and historic sites to suggest that the state has been populated all these years, but those are his only reflections of Illinois culture. No people appear in his photographs. If any criticism can be levelled at his gorgeous book, it is perhaps that Clay's vision of the state is narrow — with La Salle County, where he lives, receiving more than its share of attention. But Clay is, after all, an artist with a camera; all we have a right to ask is that his work is excellent — and it is. Nature in Illinois never looked so good before.

The book has a Foreword by Paul Harvey, which is a brief but intelligent recommendation of Clay's work. The photographer's wife, Kathy Clay, provides a Preface that states the book's obvious intention: "For those of you who think that Illinois is an agricultural or industrial wasteland, we hope the images presented in this book portray the state's diverse beauty" (p. 11). They certainly do, and as such they can't help but encourage preservation of our remaining wild places. That is undoubtedly why the state's leading nature writer, John Madson, also wrote a fine Preface to the volume, explicitly making the case for preservation. And Madson is right: the state's natural areas have never been photographed "with more crystalline clarity than here" (p. 13). Clay is indeed a kind of poet with a camera, as Madson says. Surely color photographs don't come any better than this.

Irving's *Illinois* combines the natural and the cultural in a brilliant photographic reflection of the state. Included are some lovely nature photographs, marvelous shots of Chicago, and arresting images of the rural landscape. And the cut lines that accompany the photographs help to point out the cultural significance of his images. One can understand much about Illinois from the book. It also includes a very well written historical commentary on the state by Kristina Valaitis — but one suspects that few people will read it. The high quality photographs keep drawing the reader's attention away from the text.

It is an interesting coincidence that the books by Clay and Irving both employ quotations from Carl Sandburg's poetry to complement some of the photographs. The poetry adds nothing in either case — except perhaps to convey the notion that superb photographs are poetic too. Anyone interested in Illinois — or in great color photography — will fall in love with Irving's *Illinois* and Clay's *Illinois: Images of the Landscape*.

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CONTRIBUTORS

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